

was progressing. At that time it would have been within the direct line of railway communication as then proposed. I have no objection to a Committee of this House following up the enquiry, although it is a very unusual proceeding. It is undoubtedly a sort of censure on the Government, because the information sought is available in the blue books issued from time to time by the Department of Public Works, and the usual way of getting such information is to call for reports, rather than to appoint a body of gentlemen to assume the right of interfering with a work which the Government is supervising. It is a very unusual proceeding, to say the least. Before the Committee is struck, I will probably desire to make a few observations as to how that Committee ought to be formed. Last year, when a committee, somewhat similar to this, was being formed, I took the ground that the Government ought at least to be represented on that committee by a majority of members. I am quite aware that that view was not approved of by the House; that some hon. members who spoke on the subject, took the view that the feeling of the majority of the members of this Senate should be represented rather than the Government. I do not think, in a matter of this kind, where it is, no doubt, a subject into which a good deal of political bias enters, that it is quite fair or proper that the Executive should be judged by a hostile committee, and, while I should be the last to accuse any hon. gentleman in this Chamber of being actuated by a hostile feeling on a committee, still, where the committee is avowedly for the purpose of casting a reflection on the Administration, it is but reasonable to suppose that, unwittingly, gentlemen unfavorable to the Government would come to the same conclusions as the hon. Senator who introduced this motion. The practice in this Chamber is based, I believe, on the practice in the House of Lords. The practice in that body is, where five members desire it, the committee should be struck by the House.

Hon. Mr. McLELAN—I would just say in connection with the observations of the hon. Secretary of State, it would afford me great pleasure to be left off this committee. I would ask the House, that some other name be substituted for mine, as I may not be in a position to give that

*Hon. Mr. Scott.*

time and attention to the enquiry that the hon. Secretary of State would desire. Whatever selection may be made, I hope that the committee will be able to elucidate all the facts in this case. I confess, from the statements made by my hon. friend from Toronto, there appear a good many things that are hard to understand or believe in connection with this matter, and I trust the committee will carefully investigate it and report the facts to the House. The hon. Secretary of State, in his remarks, has reminded us again, as he has at other times done, of the cost of the Dawson Route. He tells us that road cost something like \$1,250,000, and that the Government felt it their duty to abandon it and send all the passengers going to the North-West, through the United States.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—We leased it for two years.

Hon. Mr. McLELAN—The remark of the hon. gentleman was that they found it cheaper and better to send them all by the United States. The hon. gentleman forgets, perhaps, there was a time when this road was an absolute necessity, not only for the earlier immigrants, but to take in the men into the North-West that were necessary for the protection of life and property on the Red River, and to preserve that country to the Dominion. I refer to the time when we sent troops to Fort Garry, and when the United States refused to let them pass through any portion of their territory. I gather from the remarks of the hon. Secretary of State, that he maintains that had the railway been built upon the line first proposed, this lock at Fort Francis would have given uninterrupted navigation for 160 miles, and furnished water communication between the two ends of the railway. Now, supposing this to be the fact, we can see, perhaps, there was some reason for an expenditure to connect the two sections of railway that were being built but, if you admit that, then when the location of the railway was moved further north, and put in such a position as to render the lock at Fort Francis useless, unless the obstructions mentioned by the hon. Senator from Toronto were removed, why did the Government continue the expenditure. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Macpherson) had shown that the lock