

British private bill legislation in our libraries. Where was the necessity for hurry in this matter, or for any bill to deprive certain gentlemen of a monopoly in Newfoundland, without giving them an opportunity of showing what their position was and what their rights? This legislation might be had as well next as this session. Why should not a clause be inserted beyond all doubt saving existing rights? How could this Parliament, which was being pushed so much by the Government, in regard to this bill, grant rights to telegraph companies in another country? This clause was a blind, as the hon. gentleman from Alma had observed, to make believe a protection existed which did not; it was contrary to common sense to assume the possession of the power to land wires in a foreign country.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER.—They may by an arrangement say this—if you allow a different cable to land in such a country, in which you have rights, we shall allow it or yours to land in ours.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL again urged the House to create that protection to existing rights which this clause pretended to give, but which it did not furnish. That was the purport of the amendment, which should certainly be adopted [Hear, hear.]

Hon. Mr. MACPHERSON said it has been admitted by all who opposed the bill that it was in itself desirable, provided it could be passed without invading vested rights. There was no member of this House who would be more resolutely opposed to the invasion of vested rights than he should be, and if he believed any such would be trencched upon by the passing of this measure he should oppose it. [Hear, hear.] But he did not think that any such vested rights as were claimed in this case existed. He agreed with the honorable gentleman from Alma who, while opposed to the passing of the bill, said he did not believe in the existence of any vested rights spoken of. He [Mr. M.] did not think that any hon. member believed in his heart there were any vested rights involved here which would be touched by the passing of this Bill [Hear, hear.] There was no necessity for amending a Bill, nominally to make it safe, when it was safe enough without amendment. A good deal had been said as to insufficient notice to the parties concerned. It was within the knowledge of almost every honorable gentleman present that there had been considerable communication by telegraph, from the east and the west, within the last ten days on this subject.

Now were there any vested rights involved or endangered, would not the parties interested have made out their existence? A vested right could not be indefinite or misty. It must be acquired under an Act of the Legislature or some authority. In sending these telegrams across the Atlantic, what would be more easy than to say to this Parliament—we are protected in this right by such and such an Act of the Imperial Legislature or of Nova Scotia? Would not that be the natural course to pursue, and not telegraphing gentlemen here to exert their influence to prevent this Bill being passed? We knew there was no vested right, and that if one existed, conferred by the Imperial Parliament, the passing of this Act would not interfere with it—[hear, hear.]—because any act of ours, passed in contravention of one of that Parliament, was worthless and fell to the ground [Hear, hear.] But, moreover, if no Imperial Act existed, the Imperial Government had a right to veto any act of ours and certainly would veto it in the event of injustice. They exercised a veto in respect to a Nova Scotia Act conferring privileges upon this very Company. In what sense? Not because it was depriving the Company of a vested right, but because it was conferring rights and privileges upon them, which gave them a monopoly, which was opposed to a sound public policy to set aside. In view of that fact, could there be any question of the view the Imperial Parliament would take of this subject? It is one in which this country is deeply concerned. From the time the Atlantic Cable has been in existence it has been impossible for the Dominion to have any direct communication by it with the mother country. Our messages had all to go through New York, a state of things which ought not to exist. [Hear, hear.] Newfoundland stood geographically between this country and Europe, so that it was almost impossible for another company to lay a cable while the present monopoly existed. Surely if we could, without infringing upon any vested rights, put an end to the existence of this monopoly, and so obtain an independent British and Canadian telegraph line, it was our duty to do so. [Hear, hear.] We knew very well the cost of telegraphing was enormous, and very much more than it ought to be; this monopoly had a perfect right to make its own charges though this whole Continent found them a serious grievance. The Government had been censured for endeavouring to force through this bill. The object, he