

Mr. F. Jones held that there could be no doubt that this railway would be for the benefit of two or more Provinces, and a matter that might be local to-day might be of general importance hereafter. If any work could be considered of public utility this must be so considered. It was for the House to decide, as no one could deny that they had the right to decide, whether it was of general or merely local importance.

Dr. Parker did not think that it should be left to the Speaker to decide whether this was a matter to come before the House or otherwise. The Government should say at once whether it is their opinion that this is such a Bill as the House should be asked to legislate upon.

Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald said, that two distinct questions arose—first, what was the law, secondly, what might be expedient. There could be no doubt but that under the Union Act such a matter did come under the jurisdiction of this Parliament, and that if the Bill should pass, it would become the law of the land. It was of consequence not to overload this House with business of this nature. This was not the stage for the Government to announce a policy regarding such Bills, each of which must stand upon its own merits. Every Bill showing *prima facie* that its enactments would be for general advantage, should go to Committee, who would be able to arrive at evidence beyond the easy reach of the House. Whether the two clauses so frequently referred to have been introduced merely to evade the law, or with *bona fide* could not be determined by the House, except at great expense of time and trouble. He agreed that all advantages sought for, except those contained in these two clauses, might have been obtained from the Local Parliament, and that the Company might then have come here for such further powers as they required. It would be the duty of any Committee to which the Bill should be referred to look with great jealousy into the constitution, purposes and resources of the Company, and to satisfy themselves that there was sufficient capital to carry out the works they proposed. The present mere statement to that effect could not suffice. Such a measure should properly go to a Railway Committee and be well considered there, and such Committee might be charged to take a review of the whole subject.

Mr. Shanly spoke in support of the Bill, arguing that the ferry across the St. Law-

rence proposed by it was of itself sufficient to bring it under the cognizance of the Dominion Parliament.

Mr. Ferguson said that any work between or beyond the limits of the Provinces clearly came within jurisdiction of the House. Two Acts might certainly be sought—one in Ontario and the other in Quebec, but only at a very great inconvenience. If the condition be added that the Charter to be now granted shall be forfeited if the extension promised be not carried out within a certain time, he was sure that no one would object to the Charter being granted. (Hear, hear.) Otherwise the House might be imposed upon.

Mr. Johnson simply asked was it to be held that the two clauses were integral portions of the Bill. If so, lesser matters would be merged into greater, and minor powers added as of course to those more extensive ones which Local Legislatures could not give. He admitted that there was nothing binding the Company to extend their railway into Lower Canada, and this ought to be remedied. It would be very awkward to be compelled to go to both Local Parliaments, as had been suggested, as the effect of obtaining two such charters would be the creation of two companies, both composed of the same individuals, but as distinct from each other as A is from B. Great difficulties would arise in consequence, and not merely to the company itself, but to any parties having dealings with it, or claims against it, for which it would not be easy to say which branch of it should be made liable. It was not for the Government, but for the Legislature to declare what would be for the advantage of the country, and if such declaration be made, the Act must be binding.

Hon. Mr. Howe feared that if the time of the House were to be taken up with such matters as these, honourable members would be unable to return to their homes before Christmas.

Mr. Pope held that the proper body to settle questions of this kind was not the Government, but the House itself; and for his part he would not surrender that power into the hands of the executive, although the honourable member for Centre Wellington, who was a steadfast supporter of the Government—(laughter)—might be willing to abide by the decision of the Government.

Dr. Parker explained that he had only suggested that the Government should take