

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, 23rd December, 1880.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

PRAYERS.

## INDEPENDENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Sir RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT introduced a Bill (No. 9) for the better securing the independence of Parliament and preventing corrupt practices. He said: I may briefly state the object of this Bill. We are about to create a railway corporation with extraordinary powers, and the object of the Bill is to cause to be inserted in the law such additional stringent provisions as may make it difficult for such a corporation to interfere improperly with the election of members of this House, by the practice of any of those corrupt acts which we know, by the experience of the United States and other places, have in former times been practiced by such corporations. Perhaps it would not be admissible, according to the practice of the House, to enter into a discussion of the details of the Bill until such times as it shall have been printed and placed in the hands of hon. members.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I think the usual practice upon the introduction of a general, not a private, Bill—I believe it is the almost universal practice in England, though we have not adhered so closely to it here—is that the explanations of the Bill should be made upon the first reading; and not upon the second.

Sir RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT. I have no objections to explaining it now. Corporations, as we all know, are very difficult to deal with, or, according to the well known dictum of a well known and eminent English lawyer, we can neither punish the body or the soul of a corporation. I propose that if a corporation be convicted of improper practices, its charter shall be forfeited. I propose, also, that the members, officials or directors of such a corporation may be subjected to more severe punishment than the law provides,—should they be found guilty of aiding, abetting, or conniving at,—for the grave offence of corrupting members of the Legislature of this Dominion. Those are the chief points which I propose to aim at, and those are the modes by which I propose to reach my object. I believe such offences should be held to be misdemeanors, which they are not at present. I think this is a sufficient explanation of the Bill—more than is usual at this stage of a Bill of this character.

Bill read the first time.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. FERGUSON. Before the Orders are called, I desire to make a personal explanation in the matter which came before the House the other day. I refer to a statement made on page 96 of the Auditor General's report, wherein he states:

"I observe that I failed to remark in my letter of the 13th instant, on three cases of payment of indemnity to members of the Commons, which do not appear to be covered by the Act, to which reference was made in that letter. The three cases are Mr. C. J. Coursol, Mr. J. B. Mongenais, and Mr. C. E. Ferguson. The above named parties were paid full indemnity, though absent from the House for a portion of the Session."

I was so astonished at the statement, at first, that I was unable to offer any explanation. The first intimation I had of my name being in the report was the remarks of the hon. member for Montreal East (Mr. Coursol). I did not think so much about my name being mentioned as I did of the charge of having resorted to the disreputable practice

of signing a declaration which was not true. I called at the office of the Auditor General, and stated my grievances. He kindly consented to investigate the matter, and subsequently sent me the following letter:

"OTTAWA, December 20th, 1880.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—On examination it appears that your name was mentioned instead of Mr. M. P. Ryan, where it was intended to point out those members who, last Session, received indemnity under a Resolution of the Commons, for the time during which, they were absent from Ottawa. The examiner who made the error, was new to the work of audit and under instructions to point out payments which were made without authority or an apparent authority, when greater authority had otherwise determined.

"I noted payment to you, which was perfectly regular, as you were ill while in Ottawa. I send him with this, to make a personal explanation on the subject. It never occurred to me that the persons, whose names were given, would feel directly affected, by notice being taken of the matter. It having been, so far as I can recollect, the custom for the last ten years, to pay, on a Resolution of the House, those members who were, through illness, absent from the Seat of Government during any portion of the Session.

"I presume that the result of attention being drawn to the subject, would either be an amendment of the Indemnity Act, or a discontinuance of the Resolution, and my sole object was to bring about that result.

"Yours very truly,

"J. L. McDOUGALL,

"Auditor General.

"To C. F. FERGUSON, Esq., M. P.,  
"House of Commons,  
"Ottawa."

Of course, to myself, that letter personally is satisfactory, but it is not satisfactory to have my name paraded in that connection in a public document under the authority of an officer of the House.

## CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

The House resumed the further consideration of the proposed motion of Mr. Blake, for an order of the House for statement shewing in detail the particulars of the various modifications and alterations made in location, design and otherwise, whereby the estimated cost of the section of the Canadian Pacific Railway, between Kamloops and Yale, was reduced in April, 1880, from the estimate of 1878, &c.

Mr. BLAKE. When six o'clock arrived yesterday I was about to address myself to the other portion of the Pacific Railway, excluding the portion in British Columbia. But before quite leaving that portion I may just mention that there appears to be some discrepancies in the estimate of April, 1880, of the Chief Engineer, with reference to the section from Jasper to Kamloops. If the hon. Minister would look at the mileage and the cost per mile, he will find that they do not sum out the aggregate of \$15,500,000, which is stated as the cost. I am not sure that that error is altogether in the estimation, because this year we find instead of an addition of 15 miles to the mileage, which addition would go a considerable way to make the gross sum of \$15,500,000, which would still, however, leave \$200,000 or \$300,000 short, to the extent of which the proposition of work done by the Syndicate would be lightened. Then a word with reference to the section from Lake Superior to Red River. We know that the estimate for 1879 was \$18,000,000, that the estimate for April, 1880, \$17,000,000, a difference achieved to a very considerable extent, as I understand it, by a saving in one particular part of between three or four miles of the road, and also something in rolling stock. But the estimate of April, 1880, has been modified still further. The reduction of \$18,000,000 to \$17,000,000 has been modified still further by improvements in location and modification of design, to the amount of \$1,385,000, a very considerable additional reduction. Upon that a paper which the hon. gentleman brought down yesterday or the day before, throws some light, and a portion of that reduction obviously is, by that paper, explained to be a further prosecution of the work of economy in improving the service and adapting the railway