

Parliament would meet in February, and sit until May, and nothing could be done towards carrying out the pledge to British Columbia, of commencing the construction of the road within two years until after the close of the session. He was sure every hon. gentleman opposite, though he might be politically opposed to the Government of the day, was satisfied they would do their best to get a solvent honest company to undertake the construction of the road.

The hon. member for Châteauguay (Hon. Mr. Holton) would not accord them his political confidence. He would give them so much of his confidence as a man of business as to believe they would endeavour to get such an honest, straightforward company as would push the work to completion. As for granting a charter, he wished to know what was the difference between giving the contract to either or both of the companies whose charters were now before the Railway Committee, or to real capitalists outside? Rich as the members of those companies might be as individuals, all their wealth would not build 50 miles of the road.

The object of the Government in inserting this clause was to prevent such a combination of the companies as might create a monopoly, as had been the case with the Atlantic cable companies. The two companies now being chartered might amalgamate and say, "We have got the charters, and you must either deal with us and on our terms, or break faith with British Columbia." The faith of the country must be kept at all hazards. With this clause in the Bill the Government could deal with capitalists in London or New York. It was simply to prevent monopoly and keep those companies in order. It was in the interests of the country that the clause was inserted. The Government did not ask for any discretion over money or land. They only asked such powers as were requisite to decide which, after a careful survey, would be the best line for the country, and who were the best capitalists to be entrusted with the building of it.

**Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE** said the remarks of the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt) had proved that the undue haste with which the work was being pushed forward had given rise to this extraordinary legislation. He could understand the argument as to taking extraordinary powers to meet any extraordinary emergency which had arisen; but they were not creating that emergency.

**Hon. Sir A.T. GALT:** We did last session.

**Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE** denied that entirely. It was true they were bound to commence the work within two years, but they had been much more bound to begin the Intercolonial Railway within six months. But the Premier, four years and a half ago, argued that they were commencing that road when they were placing surveyors upon it. (*Hear, hear.*) He (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie) believed that was a fair commencement. He believed they were losing ground by this haste, that they were beginning the wrong way, and one of the results would be that either the road would cost more than it should, or some company would undertake it in blind confidence as to the

result, knowing nothing of the ground, and would break down, so that they would have the thing on their hands with only a million dollars to fall back upon. (*Hear, hear.*) He denied that the Joint Stock Act was any precedent and showed in what respects it differed from this measure; but he defied the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt) to find any Bill passed by the House which gave the Government power to change an existing Act of Parliament.

**Hon. Sir A.T. GALT:** I did not say that.

**Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE** observed that that was one of the powers given by this Bill and the hon. member would find no previous Act of Parliament which committed the power to the Government irrespective of that of which he had just spoken, which this did. He did not doubt that Parliament had the power to do this, but he argued that they ought not to do it. It was, in his opinion, one of the most dangerous acts that ever a legislature was guilty of, to pass the Act in its present shape.

He advocated commencing in the middle of the line where everything was in favour of the undertaking. He was prepared to do his utmost to accomplish this work. He had always believed that the building of a Pacific Railway was essential for the country and while endorsing the views of the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt) as to the commercial advantages to be derived from it at present, he was not blind to the advantages which would accrue before many years from the rich country around the centre of the line. While he was willing to give every fair assistance to the Government in the accomplishment of this work, he was bound to resist such usurpations of power, though he had only half a dozen men to stand at his back. (*Applause.*)

**Mr. FERGUSON** said he thought the House would see clearly that the arguments of the hon. gentleman who had just taken his seat (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie) were entirely based upon supposition. He believed that it was the hearty desire of the Government to deal fairly and honestly with the two companies offering to build the railway and it was only just that the Government should have the power to take the contract out of their hands if they did not comply with its provisions. He would prefer leaving it in the hands of the Government to settle the matter rather than to the decision of the House. They had had sufficient evidence in Ontario to prove that bringing such a matter before Parliament was nothing but a mockery.

**Mr. THOMPSON (Cariboo)** was present some three months ago when the Legislature of Ontario voted two million dollars to railways, and could endorse the statement of the hon. gentleman who had just sat down that the process was a farce. The matter was brought down shortly before prorogation and pushed through without time being given for consideration. He thought it much safer to leave the money in the hands of the Government. He hoped the House would look upon the construction of the road as a national necessity and push it forward to completion without delay.