

of any railway company incorporated under the laws of this Province, when the said company has not complied with the terms of its charter as to the commencement and completion of its works within the prescribed time, or when the said company has become insolvent, or when the said company does not or is not able to proceed with the work, or for any other cause, which, in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, is sufficient to justify such cancellation."

The Honourable Mr. Blanchet saw in this clause a great danger for popular liberties, and proposed the six months' hoist.

The Honourable Mr. Mercier replied to him as follows :

(*Extract.*)

"Mr. Speaker, what is happening at the present time? Take the Baie des Chaleurs Railway.

"This company has asked to have its subsidies doubled up. It had been granted a subsidy of 10,000 acres per mile for 180 miles, which makes 1,800,000 acres. The Federal Government had granted it \$3,200 per mile for 180 miles.

"Both Governments have doubled up the subsidies. That is, the company after having received all the subsidies intended by the authorities for the railway, arrests the whole progress of that country, refuses to pay legitimate debts, refuses to pay for the lands over which the road passes, to pay for the crossings which were made last winter by the poor farmers, and to pay for the provisions bought in the shops.

"This company is there, and when we say to other persons: 'Go on and try to buy out the rights of the present shareholders in order to proceed,' the shareholders ask exorbitant prices. They do not want to do anything but make money at the expense of the public. We ask to have the power of annulling this charter in the public interest.

"If we obtain this power, what will be the result? The shareholders will sell their rights at reasonable prices, and other persons will be able to construct the road.

"Take some other cases. You have the Montreal and Sorel Railway Company, to which we have given \$112,000 to pay certain claims and to finish the road. The claims have been paid, but the company has refused to finish the road. And since that time the company not only refuses to obey us, but it does not even answer the letters which we write to it.

"Do you believe that is just? Why not annul this charter and permit responsible people to finish this road, which will give an outlet to the rich population of the Counties of Verchères and Chambly? The public interest demands it. Private interests object to it. I might cite other cases, but I content myself with these two, which seem to be the most exorbitant."

(*Translation.*)

MONDAY, 29th December, 1890.

EXTRACT from the Speech of the Honourable Mr. Mercier, delivered in the Legislative Assembly on the 23rd December, 1890, upon a resolution concerning the Railway Subsidies granted by the Statute 54 Vic. (2nd Session), chap. 88.

We have, gentlemen, at the eastern extremity of the country, a railway for which the Province of Quebec has already made enormous sacrifices—the Baie des Chaleurs Railway. I will not yield to the temptation to say what I think of those who have received the money of the Province and of the Dominion to make this road, and who have not made it. In matters of this importance recriminations are not only useless, but they become dangerous; and I shall not advance the course of public prosperity by making recriminations at this time.

But the fact is there. All the world can judge of it. Consequently, I need not pass judgment in this respect. All that I will say is, that this road has received a subsidy of 10,000 acres of land for 180 miles, which makes 1,800,000 acres of land at