

May 31, 1872

**Hon. Sir A.T. GALT** thought that Hon. Mr. Holton's argument amounted to nothing. If the parties he had referred to were the best to carry out this undertaking, the Government would be to blame if they did not select them. If any other conclusion were come to save this, that the Government could grant charters, the Government would find themselves unable to deal with any companies except those two or three which had given notice and got Acts of incorporation from Parliament. He saw no derogation from the rights of Parliament in this measure. It was done in England, where you could get a charter for a company for almost any purpose under the sun.

**Hon. Mr. HOLTON:** Not for railways.

**Hon. Sir A.T. GALT** considered that the amendments which had been made and agreed to by the Government were almost without exception in the direction of making difficulties in the way of carrying out this undertaking. He had been of the opinion that it was unwise to enter upon the undertaking at all, that the time was so short in which to construct the railway, but Parliament undertook to construct this work in ten years and were bound as an honourable body to carry out that obligation in the best way they could. He saw clearly that the work could not be done in ten years from 1871, unless great powers were given to the Government for which they must be held to strict account. He was convinced that very great risk would attach to those who entered into this undertaking, and that to get it completed in anything like the specified time the Government would have to make the assistance available as speedily and efficiently as possible. He was satisfied that there was no basis of traffic existing upon which \$100,000,000 could be raised. (*Hear, hear.*) Few of them had any adequate idea of what 50,000,000 acres of land meant. To bring that territory into the market a vast quantity of work must be got through. Unless it were sold, he did not see how the money was to be obtained, and to sell it involved continental arrangements for immigration on a very large scale and expenditure to bring immigrants to this country.

He was afraid there would be great disappointment as to the time of the completion of the work and as to the success of those who engaged in it. It seemed to be supposed that the work would commence at both ends; but the prudent course to take would be to begin at as many points at once as were accessible; but with the provisions of the bill for only giving the assistance on the completion of the sections, that could hardly be done. If these sections were short, the line would not be completed in the expected time; if long, no company, he believed, would be able to find the money to carry on the work so long without assistance. He should vote against any amendment which would restrain the Government in carrying out the work.

**Hon. Mr. WOOD** said it seemed, from the remarks of the hon. gentleman, that this was a most alarming undertaking and yet the whole of this power was thrown upon the Government of the day and the House was denuding itself of all power and control over the undertaking. (*Hear, hear.*) The hon. member deplored this state of

things, but said the work could not be done without; so the "one-man-power" was to give away \$30,000,000 of our money and 50,000,000 acres of our land, which would be a mere drop in the bucket as to what the cost would ultimately be.

The idea seemed to have been entertained that they could commence at both ends simply, but of course they must begin at all accessible points. But as the member for Sherbrooke (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt) had shown, this could not be done in the face of the provision that the money should only be paid when certain parts of the road were completed. The great difficulty in a work of this kind was in organizing and getting the supplies on the spot and opening the ground, and to do this would involve the expenditure of millions on millions. No company could raise the money on the security of a few blocks of land and the assurance of getting assistance as sections were completed. Very likely the whole affair would turn out a fiasco in the end. (*Hear, hear.*) The \$30,000,000 would be expended, the land locked up, and the line useless.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** said if the House were to judge from the majority of speakers on the amendment, the Government had erred in having placed great limits on their own powers rather than too great an extension of them.

**Hon. Mr. HOLTON:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** said he was free to confess he believed there was a great deal in what the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt) had said. Parliament should have left the Government such power as would insure the uninterrupted and speedy construction of the road. Parliament, however, seemed desirous of placing a limitation on the powers of the Government and the clauses of limitation were therefore inserted. He did not think the objection at all a fatal one to the success of the enterprise. The company or capitalists with whom the Government would deal would be solvent and such as they believed competent to carry out the work. Such company would be known to the capitalists of the world and they could, by means of their credit and the subsidies to be given them on land and money, be enabled to raise all capital necessary, in addition to their own, to construct the road.

He did not see there was any usurpation of power on the part of the Government in this Act. Parliament decided where the road should begin and end; how much assistance in money and land, and no more, it should receive; and all that was left to the Government to decide—and that of necessity, as the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt) had shown—was to select men that were to proceed without delay to make the road. The terms were there, no matter who were to undertake the work—whether Sir Hugh Allan or Mr. Macpherson, or others whose names had been spoken of in connection with it. All the Government asked was to have the selection of the company, and one reason for that was they desired to carry out the agreement with British Columbia. If the company were to be selected and approved by Parliament no step could be taken towards constructing the road before next year.