

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Do I understand my hon. friend to give notice of a motion, or merely of a discussion?

Mr. WILSON. A discussion, which may be followed by a motion.

Motion agreed to, and House adjourned at 12.50 a.m., Tuesday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, July 14, 1903.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

OTTAWA VALLEY RAILWAY COMPANY.

Mr. F. D. MONK (Jacques Cartier) moved:

That portion of the twenty-fourth report of the Select Standing Committee on Railways, Canals and Telegraph lines reporting the preamble of Bill (No. 59) respecting the Ottawa Valley Railway Company not proven, be referred back to the said committee for further consideration.

The PRIME MINISTER (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier). Explain.

Mr. MONK. I wish to give some explanation in regard to this motion. These explanations are somewhat useless to those members of the Railway Committee who have attended the discussion of this Bill; but I must give the explanation in order to enlighten the House and obtain the favour of this motion. The Ottawa Valley Railway Company was incorporated several years ago, somewhere in the seventies, I think or 'eighties, and began operations by constructing a line from Lachine to St. Andrews. It operated that line for a certain time, when the line was found not to be a paying one and the railway was subsequently transferred, I believe, under some agreement, to the secretary-treasurer of the municipality, who operated it for a certain time. The company applied this year to parliament for power to extend this line from St. Andrews down through the county of Argenteuil by St. Placide, St. Benoit and St. Eustache, crossing a part of the county of Laval and part of the county of Jacques Cartier into the city of Montreal. When the Bill, which was a very simple one—for the line of railway does not extend for more than about forty miles—came up for consideration, several objections were raised. One was that there was a previous charter in favour of another company. But the merit of that objection was not very long sustained. There was, in fact some time before confederation—in 1856, if I mistake not—an Act passed by the old province of Canada, which was subsequently amended in 1859—having reference to the

Carillon and Grenville Railway Company, giving that company power to construct a line through the county of Argenteuil, thence to some point in the county of Jacques Cartier near Point Claire or Lachine. The objection based upon this charter was not discovered to be well founded for two reasons. In the first place, the charter has become obsolete. There is no doubt about that. The company organized when the late Sir John Abbott was a young man, and never prosecuted its work and had manifested no intention of carrying the line down in the direction of Montreal. Furthermore, what rights it might have been possessed by the Ottawa River Navigation Company, which had only availed itself of these rights in order to make the connection between Grenville and Carillon and enable the navigation company to overcome the obstacle in its route between Ottawa and Montreal offered by the Grenville rapids. I say that that objection was easily disposed of. Well, the line contemplated, even in 1859 or 1856, as the case may be, went in the direction of Pointe Claire, or in the direction of Lachine, and not at all along the line contemplated by the present statute, which was through St. Placide, St. Benoit, St. Eustache, across Rivière des Prairies, through the counties of Laval and Jacques Cartier, and into the city of Montreal itself. I will not further detain the House with that objection, which, as I understood, was disposed of at once.

A more serious objection was raised founded upon the Canadian Statutes of 1894. In these statutes, under chapter 63, is found an Act respecting the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway, and without going into details of that Act, it is sufficient to say, for the purpose of my present argument, that that Act sanctions an agreement entered into between what I may call the celebrated Atlantic and Lake Superior Railroad, and this very railway company, the Ottawa Valley Railway, and under the terms of that agreement, which is schedule D of the Act, chapter 63, of 57-58 Victoria, it would seem that the Ottawa Valley Railway Company had transferred all its rights, powers and franchises to the Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway Company in order to form one of its lines. When that objection was raised I was not prepared to meet it, but delay was given in order that the matter could be looked into as to whether the Ottawa Valley Railway Company really existed any more. In the agreement there were various conditions. The Atlantic and Lake Superior Railway was to transfer, within a delay of sixty days to the Ottawa Valley Railway, as a condition of its acquisition by the first named railway, a certain amount of bonds, a certain amount of shares and a certain amount in cash; failing which transfer within sixty days the agreement, to use the very terms of the schedule, would be null and void, and of no effect. It there-

Mr. WILSON.