

PRINTING COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Mackenzie presented the second report of the Printing Committee. The Committee reported a scheme of distribution of printed documents and audit of the accounts for printing and the report of the Clerk of Committee on the printing service of last session. On the reference to the Committee of the subject of reporting the debates, they reported that it had been decided on a division to defer the question to a further meeting of the Committee.

ST. LAWRENCE AND OTTAWA RAILWAY COMPANY

Mr. Crawford (South Leeds), in moving the second reading of this Bill, said that the railway would connect the River Ottawa and the Capital of the Dominion with the St. Lawrence at Prescott, a route that was familiar to every member of the House. Discussion had arisen as to what the powers of this Parliament might be regarding Acts of this nature, but he understood that no objection had been taken on any side to the measure itself, which had not, in fact, been as yet before the House. Its preamble, which was a lengthy document, recited various Acts affecting the Ottawa and Prescott Railway Company, which had, like many others in this country, unfortunately fallen into pecuniary difficulties, a Bill having been passed in 1865 to enable its sale to Mr. Robinson, and by order of the Court of Chancery the property and rights of the company were vested in him in trust. It was only sought by the present Bill to vest in the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Company what Mr. Robinson held under this order. It had subsequently become necessary to raise money to put the road in good repair, and a mortgage had been effected upon it for that purpose. It was now proposed to increase the capital to \$1,500,000, and to extend the line across the Ottawa River to Aylmer, which was the promoters only reason for applying to the General Legislature, in the belief that the Local Parliament had no power to grant the authority they sought. An Act might be obtained more easily in the Local Legislature, where undoubtedly there would be no opposition. The promoters possessed an interest of \$800,000 in the property, and had expended upon it fifty thousand pounds sterling, which ought to be the best guarantee for their earnestness and bona fides. The Bill proposed to declare that the railway, connecting the capital of the

Dominion with the Grand Trunk line and uniting the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, is of public importance to the whole Dominion. The question mainly was whether each measure should not be judged as to its merits on its introduction, which would prevent the General Government hereafter taking into its hands works authorized locally; but which might subsequently be discovered to possess a general importance. Neither the Ontario nor Quebec Parliament could grant authority to cross the River Ottawa. It had been said that this House should not be occupied with questions of such trifling importance which must necessarily take up much of their attention—for example the establishing of a ferry behind these buildings. It was intended to cross the St. Lawrence by ferry to Ogdensburgh, and the narrow gauge had been adopted, so that the cars might be conveyed across and run upon the American line. It may hereafter be considered necessary to set apart a territory for this House to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over, to be taken partly from Quebec and partly from Ontario, after the example of the District of Columbia. The St. Lawrence and Ottawa Railway would cross this territory, with which this Parliament alone could deal.

Mr. Shanly seconded the motion.

Mr. Smith was of opinion that the matter was altogether one for the consideration of the Local Legislatures, and that it would not be right for this House to interfere to deprive any of the Provinces of their legitimate powers, and that great care and caution should be observed to avoid exciting jealousy and resentment by such interference. The company should first obtain a local Act for their operation within their own Province, and if, by-and-bye, they desired to extend themselves into another Province, it would then be time enough for them to come here to ask for authority to do so.

Mr. Mackenzie said that it could be only necessary to consider two clauses of the Bill—those conferring power to cross the river—as it was these only that furnished any grounds for an application to this House. It was remarkable that although the powers for extension were sought for, and the extension itself promised, there was nothing to make this extension obligatory on the company, and the introduction of these clauses seemed merely designed to serve as an excuse for avoiding the proper application to the Ontario Legislature, and coming to a wrong