

papers, including those asked for by the Premier of Quebec. The amendments were premature. The House did not officially know that the award was the decision of the Arbitrators, and before it knew that the papers must be put on the table.

**Hon. Mr. HOLTON:** Not necessarily.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD:** Yes, necessarily. The best mode of dealing with this subject was to excise from the main motion its last part, leaving the matter to be considered after the submission of the papers.

**Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER** said that the House could not decide on this important matter before it was in possession of the papers. It would be unjust to do so, and it would be dangerous to lower Canada's interests if it were admitted that this House could nullify the award.

**Mr. DUFRESNE** sustained the position taken by Hon. Sir George-É. Cartier, and invited Mr. Fournier to withdraw his motion, as it could do no good.

**Mr. JOLY** said it was well known that on four different dates, the Government of Quebec protested against the decision of the arbitrators and had more than once notified His Excellency of the resignation of the Quebec representative. In no case was anything more than a merely formal reply vouchsafed. Either the Federal Government had or had not the right to interfere. If it had, the subject was sufficiently important to call for their interference. If they had a proper regard for the peace, welfare and good understanding between the Provinces that composed the Dominion, and the Federal Government ought, if not to interfere (in case of a doubt as to its power), at least, to suspend the proceedings and if it could do neither, it should now show that it would least attempt to do so. But they had throughout shown a lack of interest in the matter. He protested against the course which the Dominion Government had taken in this matter, a course which, certainly, whatever might be their powers, was calculated to lead to difficulties.

**Mr. BLAKE** was satisfied that if the question were found to be within the province of this House, and if they had power to deal with it, they would do so in the most impartial manner. He could not agree with his hon. friend's motion on this simple ground, that he believed this House, independent of the law, had no right to deal with this question. However desirable, or undesirable it might be, they had not the power to do so, and should not attempt it. For that reason his hon. friend's motion was one which should not receive the assent of the House. He could not agree that the latter part of his motion should be excised, and if the hon. member was determined to have it done, it must be by the decision of a majority of this House. Under the circumstances of the case, it was the duty of the Government, as far as necessary for the adjustment of the debt, to assume that the decision of the arbitrators was valid until it should be decided to be otherwise, and they should have the financial arrangements based on that award, and he would not agree to have it refused unless by a majority of the House.

**Hon. Mr. DORION** contended that the Government had a right to interfere. It was the duty of the Government to say whether the award was legal or not, and whether they would act upon it or not. If the Government took no steps in the matter, it was within the power of the House to inform His Excellency that the award was null, and therefore should not be acted upon. Three arbitrators were appointed without a quorum being fixed. In the absence of one of them a decision was given, and Quebec saddled with what was considered an unfair proportion of the surplus debt. In view of this fact, he was astonished that the Government should not take any steps to set the award aside, and he thought that Quebec had just cause of complaint in the matter. As the Government did not seem to understand their duty in the matter, it would be the duty of the House to remind them of it; and he believed there was fairness enough in the House to have a just decision on the subject. For himself, it was enough that the matter had been decided in the absence of the Quebec representative, and on that ground alone it was the duty of the House to take action upon it, and immediate action too, so as to allay excitement and bad feeling. It was important to the peace and harmony of the Dominion that this question should be settled as soon as possible.

**Mr. MAGILL** said the cause of the absence of Judge Day was simply his inability to get the other two arbitrators to agree with him. If he could have done that there would have been no difficulty at all. It was a question of law, and this House had no power to deal with it.

**Mr. HARRISON** agreed with the previous speaker that this House had no power to adjudicate on the question. If the House could constitute themselves a bench of judges, they could not be said to be quite impartial. Some of them must be advocates as well as judges. He objected to having this matter sprung on the House without notice, and to discussing it at all until the papers were brought down.

**Hon. Mr. CHAUVEAU** said he was ready to defend here what was done in the (Quebec) legislature; but the members for Bellechasse and Hochelaga should not propose or try to do here what was not done in that Legislature. It was unjust to bring up and try to secure a decision or action upon the merits of the question without previous notice, or the submission of the papers. The award was illegal and unjust, and Lower Canada would never submit to it. It was not only a legal but a political question, for upon its decision depended the stability of Confederation. He would vote against the motion of the member for Bellechasse. The Dominion Government is bound to act upon this arbitration question; for the subsidy payment would be based on some view of the question. He would go further than the member for Hochelaga, and say Quebec would not submit to an unjust award from no human authority. He repeated that sentiment, and affirmed that Quebec was unanimous on this point.

**Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER:** Yes, yes.

**Hon. Mr. CHAUVEAU** would vote against the amendment of the member for Bellechasse because it was premature. He would vote for the motion of the member for Joliette, because it would do