

upon the responsibility of the Government of the day, and with all the gravity which such a course of action demands. I maintain that it is for the Government which feels that there has been such a serious miscarriage of justice, such a gross mistake, such a dreadful error or worse as to render it necessary that an international award—using the most convenient, though not a strictly accurate phrase—should be discredited and cast aside—it is for the Government which reaches that painful conclusion to come down and say so to the House, and to bring forward its justification for such a line, and to propose its solution. I maintain that no question of this description should be pitchforked into the hands of a Select Committee at the instance of a private member. I do believe the appointment of a Select Committee to discuss a question agitated so many years, in reference to which it is said there is so much evidence before the country and the House, and so much more to come, would be nothing but a farce. I do not think that, with the other duties which the members of the House are called on to perform, it is other than farcical and ridiculous to suppose that any great additional light would be thrown, during our brief Session, on this question. But the proceeding proposed is an easy mode, perhaps, for the Governments to escape responsibility and to procure some opinion from a Committee, that the boundaries are different from those laid down, and, having procured that opinion, and fortified thereby, the Government may take courage, some other time, to enter upon more active proceedings to repudiate more fully the award. What I object to in their conduct is the skirting of responsibility involved in this procedure. I should not have yet made this objection if a member of the Government had not supported the proposition that a private member should move for a Committee of Enquiry in this matter. What a novel and entirely indefensible proposal it is that a private member should take charge of this great material and moral question—moral as to whether a national award should be set aside, and material as to the extensive territory involved. It is the bounden duty of the Government itself, if disposed, to take steps which, in its opinion, the interest of the

country requires—steps tending to the disturbance and upsetting of this award,—so to state, frankly, itself, to propose those steps on its own responsibility, and to justify its course. Holding those views, I object to the appointment of the Committee, and I hope the House will be divided on the motion. I also object to the composition of the Committee, which, I think, should be chosen by the House. But my main position is that the responsibility properly devolves on the Government of dealing with the question which I, as a resident of, and a member from, the Province of Ontario, I do not hesitate to declare, I regard as infinitely more important in its moral than in its material aspect.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD: The hon. member for West Durham (Mr. Blake), in his concluding remarks, says the Government desires to escape the responsibility of adjudicating or deciding on this question, by allowing the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) to present this motion. I never have understood that the submission of any subject to a Committee is an avoidance of any responsibility that constitutionally is thrown on the Government of the day. A Committee of this kind may assist the Government, but can in no way deprive them of, or shield them from, any responsibility the Constitution imposes on them. But the hon. gentleman went on to say that this Committee, if struck, should stand on the responsibility of the Government, and not appear the result of the act of a mere private member. Well, if it be true that a private member cannot introduce a resolution on this subject, how can a private member introduce a Bill? I understand that the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills)—a private member, without consulting with the Government, I suppose for the purpose of helping the Government to escape or avoid its proper responsibility,—has taken upon himself to relieve the Government in the matter, by the introduction of a Bill on the subject. The hon. member for West Durham seems resolved to help us too. We are very much obliged to the hon. gentleman, but we will take the responsibility of any ultimate action on this subject. The manner in which the discussion arose has been correctly stated by the member for West Durham. It is quite true that the