

committee, sir, and trust that the eastern part of the Province will be well represented on it.

Mr. Annand.—I moved, Mr. Speaker; for the appointment of a Committee of Public Works, generally; but in deference to the House, I will restrain it, if they wish, to a Railway Committee.

Hon. J. W. Johnston—I want to know what is to be the real use of this Committee. The operation will be, as has been expressed by an honourable member, to take a bird's eye view of the matter, and smooth accounts instead of opening them up. My idea is to keep responsibility where it belongs: to the Commissioners and the Government.

Mr. Archibald deprecated any reflections on former Committees of Public Accounts. The Chairman of that Committee was the Hon. member for Yarmouth; and surely, sir, it will not be pretended that so great an economist would smother over anything prejudicial to the public funds. The accounts were always carefully looked over, and a detailed report brought in. I approve of the committee; but I think the house should not only charge its chairman with the Railway Accounts, but with an investigation into the progress and expenditure of our other public works.

Mr. Morrison—It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that this should be a Committee to answer any question put by members of this House in reference to a Rail Road, and the committee of Public accounts should not interfere.

Mr. Esson—All the accounts go before the committee of public Accounts as usual; but this committee is to investigate the whole subject of the Rail Road. I think there should be a head here to answer any question on the subject.

Mr. Tobin—Mr. Speaker, the more this subject is discussed the more I feel that we should be careful in the appointment of this committee. I see that Gentlemen do not know what their duty is to consist of. The Railway Board is responsible to the Government and the Government responsible to this House and the Country. Now, suppose you appoint a Committee and empower them to examine a section of the country and locate part of the Rail Road, I think it would be a very dangerous subject for them to interfere with. In that case, any question arising could not be settled. Any committee appointed should be charged to see whether the money has been properly expended and in a business like manner.

Mr. Whitman—This committee, sir, ought to be appointed to prevent monopolies. This House gave power last year to expend large sums of money on our Roads, and the Financial Secretary had to sign every payment as authorised by the House, except in cases of advances for which the Government will show the reason. As regards the Railway how are we to tell whether the commissioners have made a good or bad bargain by substituting days work for tender and contract. As to

the progress of the work, it was understood that the commissioners were to get the approbation of this House in the route to be taken. I suppose, if the commissioners make an application to this House we will be ready to answer them. I think there must be a committee of audit at least.

Mr. Killam—Another committee is certainly necessary to see how the money is spent, because the committee of Public Accounts have quite enough to do already. What supervision should take place over the road, is another question. The committee of Public Accounts are already pressed down with work; this should be an independent Committee.

Hon. Attorney General—I can only say that the accounts were constructed entirely on that principle. The Railway Accounts for the year would cover the Clerk's Table from end to end. As regards the construction of the Rail Road, some of the tenders came in too high, and the House last session authorized the Government to make 2 miles by day's labour as an experiment, but contracts were returned to, and I think the Province will be perfectly satisfied that the work was done in the cheapest manner.

Mr. Annand.—In answer to the Hon. Member for Cumberland, Sir, I am happy to corroborate the rumor that the Hon. W. Fisher who past through here a few days ago can command funds for the New Brunswick Railway and they are progressing as fast as they can. The basis of negotiations with Mr. Jackson have been given up; so that there is a hope of a clear track between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The Hon. gentleman concluded by moving his resolution.

Hon. Provincial Secretary—Saint Peter's Canal has been struck out. Before I sit down, I will explain why I approve of this committee; and that it is not so much from its necessity as its policy to enquire whether the money has been spent economically and judiciously, and whether there ought not to be important alterations in the road.

Mr. Killam—I think, before we enquire about St. Peter's Canal, the House had better send a committee to survey the place and the work first, and ought to pay the expenses of that committee. No information can be got from the report that came from it; but as regards mixing up St. Peter's Canal with the Railroad, it is all nonsense.

Hon. Attorney General—This movement has not been requested by Government, but is entirely independent of it.

Mr. Annand—I suppose the committee will be taken from the House openly.

Mr. Killam—Let us have a fair committee, the right men in the right place, and there ought to be a majority against the Government, not in its favour.

Hon. Attorney General—That will be asking rather too much from the generosity of the Government. The first question is, whether we shall have five or seven. I agree that the right men should be in the right