

man read, it was that the rates should be not exceeding those which are mentioned in a certain report of the Pacific Railway survey. My own impression is that it would be objectionable in the last degree to establish a minimum for cable messages for twenty years to come. I think there may be such improvements before twenty years are over, such expansion of traffic, that any figures which are made to-day would be perfectly fabulous in a short time. It may be otherwise, but we ought to have our hands perfectly free. It also occurs to me that this company does not offer, as far as I can judge, what have been found to be essential guarantees for maintaining telegraphic communication by a long stretch of ocean. As far as we can judge an essential guarantee is more than one cable; we cannot depend upon a single cable. They propose to have power to lay a cable or cables, but they do not propose to put themselves under any obligation to lay more than one; and if you do not insist upon laying more than one, all they will be bound to do in any reasonable interpretation of "one telegraph line," is to repair a breach as rapidly as possible when a breach is made, and in doing that they will, in the spirit, maintain telegraphic communication. I think, therefore, that unless things are shown to be different in the Pacific from the Atlantic, any provision partaking of the character of a monopoly ought to have some measure of security. These are the only observations I desire to make at this moment, because I think none of us have been able thoroughly to apprehend the whole effect of the hon. gentleman's statement and the particulars of the Order in Council, without an opportunity of giving them a more careful consideration. I desire to say, further, that we ought to have some evidence before us of the concession which the hon. gentleman says he is informed has been granted by the Japanese Government. He ought to know that in some way or other. Does the hon. gentleman know it by telegraph or by word of mouth? If he knows it by any formal document it should be laid before this House.

Mr. CAMERON (Victoria). I think it is well to go slowly when it is proposed to create a monopoly for twenty years in telegraphic communication so important as that will, no doubt, become hereafter between the Dominion of Canada and the continent of Asia. We ought to be very careful to see that the only way in which that communication can be obtained is not by the granting of a monopoly. I have been informed—I do not know how truly, I think it is the case—that the basin of the Pacific, even more than the Atlantic, presents the characteristic that the best available point for crossing it is opposite the territory of British North America; that in fact the depth of the Pacific Ocean, when you go as far south even as California, is so great that it is almost impossible with advantage to lay a cable across there, while in the Atlantic it has been found that the most advantageous point for laying a cable is opposite that part of the continent of America which belongs to Canada. If that be the case, and we possess on the Pacific seaboard, as we do on the Atlantic seaboard, the best available point for laying a cable, it is very important that we should be careful not to restrict our hands, and in fact the hands of the whole world, as we would practically be doing, by giving an exclusive privilege which would prevent the attainments and continuance of an efficient cable service across the Pacific Ocean. I do not know what information the Government may possess as to the ability or desire of other countries to lay a cable across the Pacific Ocean. I know nothing of the company which the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Currier) has just spoken of, but he states that that company is prepared to undertake the laying of this cable. I am aware from the public press—and I do not speak from any other information at the present time on this subject—that a company has recently been formed in the United States for the purpose of, and

with functions enabling them, to lay a cable across the Pacific as well as across the Atlantic, and if the fact be that which I have previously referred to, namely, that Canada presents the best point to start from, we ought to be very careful to see that we are not granting an expensive privilege too soon, or without an absolute necessity for doing so. I think also that there is inconsistency between the spirit of any such legislation as that which we are now asked to sanction, and the existing law, the Marine Electric Telegraph Act of 1875, which is still on our Statute-book, notwithstanding more than one effort to repeal it. That provides that any new company which has exclusive privileges to land in Newfoundland or elsewhere, shall be tabooed from the coast of Canada, and yet while that is the law of Canada we are asked here to grant extensive privileges on the other side of the continent to a company to lay a cable from the Pacific coast. Moreover, these resolutions provide that the company so to be incorporated shall be subject to the provisions in this very Act, namely, the Act 38 Victoria, Chap. 26. That Act provides:

"Each of the companies mentioned in the first section of this Act, or which may become incorporated in Canada under the next preceding section, is prohibited from entering into any agreement for the transmission or interchange of messages, or for participation in profits, or for the union or consolidation of capital stock, with any company or association of persons, which at any time may possess or acquire any such exclusive privilege of landing wire or cable for a marine telegraph, in Newfoundland, or the Danish possessions, and where an equal or reciprocal right is not conceded as in the proviso to the said next preceding section mentioned."

Now, this company that is proposed by Mr. Fleming and his associates would, inasmuch as it is declared to be subject to this Act, be prohibited from making an arrangement with the Anglo-American Company, because that company possesses exclusive privileges on the Atlantic side, and yet the new company would have exclusive privileges on the Pacific side, an inconsistency to which we ought not rashly and without the very strongest necessity, commit ourselves by parliamentary action. For these reasons I confess I look with considerable hesitation upon the propriety of passing these resolutions or committing ourselves, with the information now before the House, to the creation of a monopoly for twenty years, such as proposed.

Sir RICHARD J. CARTWRIGHT. I think in any case the House ought to be put in possession of the plan which is said to have been made by Mr. Sandford Fleming to the Governor in Council, as well as the Order in Council. The hon. gentleman was good enough to read one of those documents, but I think both ought to be printed and placed in the hands of the House before we are asked to go on with the consideration of this subject. Of course, if the hon. gentleman thinks it more convenient to go into Committee and give explanations there, I have no particular objection, but I really think we ought to have detailed information before we are asked to proceed further with a question of this magnitude.

Mr. MACKENZIE. The hon. gentleman, in replying to the hon. member for Ottawa, complains that the proposal to extend the line beyond the limits of Canada to the western side of the Pacific coast, was mentioned incidentally only. The hon. Minister proposes to organize this company, if it has not already been done, under the Act Chap. 26, 1875. That is an Act passed by the Parliament of Canada for the purpose of enabling companies to organize anywhere and construct marine cables; and yet the wording of that Act is as follows:—

"This Act shall apply to every company or association of persons hereafter authorized by any special or general Act of Parliament of Canada, or under the provisions of this Act, to construct or maintain telegraphic wires or cables, in, upon, under or across the gulf, bay or branch of any sea or any tidal water within the jurisdiction of Canada, or the shore or bed thereof respectively, so as to connect any Province with any other Province in the Dominion, or to extend beyond the limits of any Province."