

as a business enterprise or abandon it, and it will not be an interference with any other company. If the cable is not commenced within a year, this Company will not be in the way of Mr. Fleming or anybody else who desires to obtain a charter for the purpose of communicating with Japan or China.

Hon. Mr. CORNWALL — The remark of the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat appears to me to explain the facts in this matter. He said that at the time he introduced this Bill to the notice of the Senate he was altogether in ignorance of the project of laying a cable from British Columbia to Japan and China. That is exactly the case, and the attention of the promoters of the European, Canadian and American Cable Company was only directed to this when Mr. Langevin, on the 11th of February, introduced in the other House certain resolutions with a view of furthering Mr. Fleming's scheme. This Bill was before the House of Commons at that time, and, on the 15th of February, this most important amendment, altering the whole scope and intention of the measure, was made. I was myself in the Committee of this House when the Bill was before it, and the hon. Senator from Ottawa did not in the slightest degree lead us to suppose that the intention of the Company was to have anything to do with a submarine cable extending from the western shore of the Dominion. These amendments having been made in the Committee of the House of Commons, the Bill came back here in due course. It was introduced in the Senate with a number of other Bills from the House of Commons. The hon. Senator from Ottawa was in his place when the amendments were read, and the House was asked to concur in them, but he did not take it upon himself to explain these important amendments which had been made to the Bill, but left the House in ignorance of their nature, and they were, as is sometimes unfortunately the case, concurred in without due deliberation. So, to my mind, it appears that most unfortunate legislation has taken place with reference to this question. I think that a mistake of this sort —

Hon. Mr. SCOTT — No mistake at all.

*Hon. Mr. Scott.*

Hon. Mr. CORNWALL — A mistake of this sort having been made, it is the duty of the House to rectify it as far as possible. I think the hon. Senator who has brought the matter up in this indirect manner has done what is a perfectly right thing to do under the circumstances. The effect of these amendments will be that Mr. Fleming will be unable to go with any confidence to capitalists in England to ask them to engage in this great scheme of which he has been the original projector —

Hon. Mr. SCOTT — No.

Hon. Mr. CORNWALL — The effect will be, I imagine, that if nothing further is done, and if this Bill is assented to and becomes law, that Mr. Fleming will have to fall out of the thing altogether and leave it in the hands of this Company, who, a fortnight ago, had not the slightest intention of undertaking this gigantic scheme.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT — The hon. gentleman is mistaken; they had.

Hon. Mr. CORNWALL — Early in February they had not the slightest intention of undertaking this gigantic scheme. Why did they not go further when amending the Bill in the House of Commons and increase the capital of the Company? Their cable across the Atlantic was to be laid by a company with a capital of £1,500,000 sterling; now, under the amendment, they propose to undertake the work of laying a cable from the western coast of Canada to Asia, which involves, at least, an equal amount of money, without increasing their capital stock. These two facts — the ignorance of the hon. gentleman that there was any scheme with reference to the construction of a Pacific submarine cable, and the fact that no alteration has been made in the capital stock of the Company are, of themselves, sufficient to show that when this Bill was first introduced in the Senate they had no intention to undertake this great work. I think that the Senate, having made such a mistake — having allowed these amendments to be concurred in without any explanation of them by the hon. gentleman who had charge of the Bill should express itself strongly on the subject, and urge the Government to delay sanctioning the measure. It would be better