

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—With the leave of the House, I should like the Hon. Mr. Ferguson to continue the debate.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I intend to vote for the amendment of the hon. leader of the House, and my object in making a few remarks at this stage is to express an opinion which I entertain very strongly with regard to the treatment of this Bill by the Committee on Banking and Commerce. When a public Bill has received its second reading in this House, and is sent to a select committee, it is certainly not sent there to have its principle reviewed by that committee. It is against all parliamentary practice for a committee to assume any such duty or function as that. The object is to hear the views of those who are affected by it, either pro or con, and then to consider its provisions in detail, and make such amendments in the details of the measure as the committee may think proper; but I hold that it is altogether contrary to parliamentary practice for a committee to undertake to discuss and to negative the principle of a Bill after it has passed its second reading, a public Bill which has been sent to them; and on that account I support the motion of my hon. friend the leader of the House. As a public Bill, having received its second reading, it has, in my opinion, according to all parliamentary practice, a right to go to a Committee of the Whole without committing ourselves to the principle of the Bill any further than the House has already been committed to it by its second reading. I strongly contend that it is due to any public Bill, after it has been read a second time in this House and sent to the committee, when it comes back, to be submitted to a Committee of the Whole and therefore independently of what the opinions of hon. gentlemen might be as to the real merits of the Bill. I think that is the proper course to take with regard to it, and I think that practice is especially right in connection with this Bill because it has come to the House with a very strong commendation. All measures that pass the popular branch, and the second reading of which is agreed to by this House, of course are well commended; and this Bill though introduced by a private member of the House of Commons, was

treated by the House of Commons with great care and respect. It was sent to a strong committee of that body, of which two members of the government were members, and they reported upon it, and at a subsequent stage it was taken up by the government on the motion of the right hon. Premier. It is true, there was some opposition to it expressed in this House; nevertheless the Bill received its second reading, and with that action I think the committee exceeded their power in the matter, which was, after hearing the parties pro and con with regard to it, to have taken it up in detail and made such amendments as they considered were necessary. This is the paramount consideration which would cause me to vote for the motion of my hon. friend the leader of the House. But I listened to the very ingenious and able argument presented to the House before recess by the hon. gentleman from Middlesex, with regard to the powers of this House and of the provincial legislatures in dealing with a Bill of this kind. I have no doubt it would be regarded as presumption in me to set up my view in opposition to so distinguished a gentleman as the hon. member from Middlesex. At the same time, we have to bear in mind with regard to my hon. friend, that he has been in the provincial harness and fighting valiantly and so strongly for what he regarded as the rights of a province, and the largest province of Canada, that he has hardly divested himself of the feeling that naturally grew up in the performance of his duty to the province; but perhaps I am not fair to my hon. friend. He is generally very broadminded, and he may be broader than I am with regard to this question. However, I fear he has hardly divested himself of this feeling which grew upon him in connection with his duty to the province. My starting point in the discussion of this question would be rather different from that of my hon. friend. I may be wrong, but I look upon this as a question of trade and commerce. I dare say many hon. gentlemen will conclude that it may not be so regarded, because it points to some local transactions in trade or in commerce, and that to be a question of trade and commerce within the meaning of the British