

AFTER RECESS**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER moved the reception of the report of the Committee of the Whole on certain resolutions respecting the admission of British Columbia into Union with Canada.

Mr. MACKENZIE said that in the speech of the Hon. Minister of Militia, the statement had been made that one-third of the land in British Columbia was fit for agriculture. But it was admitted that this statement embraced the Island of Vancouver. Now, in dealing with this question, the Island must not be taken into consideration at all. From all the evidence he could obtain respecting the main land, not one-fifth of it was available for settlement by farmers, and the remaining four-fifths through which the road was likely to run, had yet to be proved good for mining purposes. It was simply absurd to put the price of that land at \$1 dollar per acre. The Hon. Minister of Customs, in his speech the other evening, had advocated entering into an obligation which he could not say the country would be able to perform. It had been said the other evening over and over again during the debate, that he (Mr. Mackenzie) had stated that he regarded the construction of the Pacific Railway as a pressing political necessity. He denied having made any such a statement. He would admit, however, that he would be willing to subject the country to some inconvenience in order to obtain communication with the Pacific through Canadian territory. He was in favour of opening up communication immediately through the country lying between the head of Lake Superior and Red River. From that point to the Rocky Mountains the way was comparatively easy and quite clear enough for the use of emigrants passing into the North West country. On the Pacific slope, there was no doubt that it would be necessary to expend large sums of money from time to time as the financial condition of the Dominion permitted in opening up a good route to this side of the Rocky Mountains.

But this country should not be bound to construct, within so short a time, such a gigantic work. The Grand Trunk had never yet paid one per cent on the capital expended on it, though passing through a well peopled country and having no scarcity of traffic, yet the hon. gentlemen opposite wished to lead the House to believe that this Pacific Railway which was to run for 2,500 miles through an uninhabited wilderness, would be a paying enterprise. We had unfortunately 200 mile lying between the head of Lake Superior and Winnipeg, which was an uninhabitable desert. Now, he would recommend a cheap narrow gauge railway with steamers on the smaller lakes, as the proper means of communication with the open prairie extending west of Fort Garry and through which it would be unnecessary to construct a road for years to come. He considered this attempt as one of the most foolish things that could be imagined—and what was it for? In order to get some 10,000 people into the Union, they were actually agreeing to pay \$10,000 a head on their account.

Such terms argued either insane recklessness on the part of the Government and their supporters, or a painful want of patriotism, which would damage the country and the character of the hon. Minister of Militia. For thirty years to come it would be unnecessary to construct the greater portion of this line. The only part of the road which would need to be constructed immediately was in British Columbia itself. He would be prepared to consider that as soon as estimates of the cost, &c., should be submitted to this House. Holding these views, he moved that all the words after “that” be omitted, and the following inserted: “having regard to the vast importance of the questions involved in the said Resolutions, (including the obligation to construct within ten years the Pacific Railway, the cost of which is estimated to exceed one hundred millions of dollars), time should be afforded to the people and their representatives for consultation before coming to a final decision; and that the consideration of the said Resolutions should, therefore, be postponed to the next Session.”

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER said that he had hoped after the discussion of the last three days all the arguments against this measure would have been exhausted, and that he would not be called upon to speak again. But after the remarks just made by the hon. member for Lambton, he felt called upon to make some reply. He was willing to give credit to the hon. members who opposed this measure, for sincerity. He (Hon. Sir George-É. Cartier) was much surprised, at the line of argument which they had followed. He was surprised that the member for Lambton should try to meet such a great question on the mere ground of cost. He admitted that the Union was a necessity and that the railway also was a necessity, but the honorable gentleman objected to be tied down to a specified time. He objected to being bound to build a line of 2,500 miles in ten years—but in past years even when the country was new and with comparatively few resources she had built 2,000 miles in eight years. Had Canada been ruined by those works, had her agricultural interests suffered on this account. And in addition to this, Canada had built the Victoria Bridge at Montreal, itself equal to 500 miles of railway, and other large bridges in different parts of the country. Had she suffered from building those works? No.

It was true that the G.T.R. proprietors were not receiving so good a return as he would like. If the railway was practicable at all, every one would admit that it could well be built in ten years. If there had been any complaint it should have been that the time allowed was too long. When it had been proposed to extend the Customs Laws of Canada to Manitoba, it had been objected to as unfair, and that the people of that country were beyond the circle of Canada, and therefore a delay of three years had been allowed until the countries could be more effectively joined and connected. Let the member for Lambton and his friends read their speeches on the North West question. Then no expense was too great, no haste too much, no trouble too great, if only the North West could be acquired, but now they said don't go so fast. He wanted to get hold of the Red River country at any cost, and now from the very same mouth that had spoken of the fertility of the North West, they heard the very opposite. He had then been willing to send any number of men to obtain possession of the country.

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Mr. MACKENZIE had stated his willingness to send any number of men not to acquire the country, but to establish the supremacy of law over insurrection.

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER resumed the comparison of the expressions of the member for Lambton last year, and this, then he had stated distinctly that the acquisition of the North West would be the only way to obtain British Columbia, but now he did not want the Union.

Mr. MACKENZIE denied this; he was as much in favour of Union as ever.

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER said the member for Lambton had stated distinctly that in swallowing the Quebec scheme he had made a mistake, and now the great Reformer of Upper Canada, the representative of everything good, the representative of the great Party of Progress, said no, we must pull up, we must stop. The Government were really the Party of Progress and action, and the member for Lambton, and those who had followed him would at the next election be taken to task by their constituents for having in order to make a case against the Government made the humiliating confession that they had made a mistake in accepting the scheme of Confederation. The member for Lambton in his argument had said that between Thunder Bay and Fort Garry there was no soil and the railway could not be built but that question could be settled by Parliament hereafter, when the railway scheme should be submitted.

Mr. MACKENZIE: What about the obligations?

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER said, suppose the hon. gentleman undertook an obligation, could he be obliged to fulfil it, if he should be prevented by unforeseen circumstances. No one could be compelled to perform an impossibility. The time was too long, and the objection could only come from an economical Scotchman, and he would predict that in a very few years the hon. gentleman would be one of the most ardent supporters of the railway. He had not been sorry to lose his motion yesterday, and he was not sincere in his present proposal. That proposal was to entail a delay of seven months; what object could there be in so doing? The matter had already been discussed sufficiently, and the time was now come for settlement, and he would say that without the prospect of British Columbia, they would never have persuaded a majority of the House to consent to acquire one inch of the North West. For the sake of the member for Lambton himself he trusted his speech would not be well reported, and especially that part in which he had spoken of the character of the land in most disadvantageous terms, and yet he said he was in favour of building a railway as soon as possible. If the land was as described by the hon. member, why should a railway be built at all? He reiterated 10 years was too long, and as to the mode of building the railway that would all be submitted to Parliament, and within the next few days the Government would ask for an appropriation for the preliminary survey. He maintained that Canada was better able to-day to undertake the Pacific railway than she had been years ago to

advance fifteen millions to the Grand Trunk. The whole affair of the hundred millions was a bugbear. There was no such thing as incurring that debt in a few years—it was an absurdity to make such a statement.

The policy was purposely to retain the lands of the country in order to build railways and open ways of communication. Canada would not have to bear the expenditure alone. British Columbia would be represented in the House, and would be equally interested in the work. Speaking of the cost of the railway, he maintained the gentlemen on the other side had played the parts of old nurses, but the children on his side of the House were not so easily frightened. He spoke of the North Pacific, quoting from a statement showing the whole length to be 2,000 miles, and the entire estimated cost seventy-six million dollars in greenbacks. It had been objected that the estimate for the Canadian Pacific might not be correct. He admitted that, but the argument worked both ways. The cost might prove very much below the estimate, and an immense amount of land was reserved to cover it. He quoted a statement showing the average cost of railway communication in the United States, showing 2,600 miles of line in operation, the average cost being, in the different States, from \$25,000 to \$33,000 per mile. It was admitted that there was a large extent of prairie land to be crossed, and the smaller expenditure necessary there would leave means to overcome difficulties in other portions. The hon. members opposite had been sufficiently unpatriotic to represent the country as that it would never attract immigration, and he quoted from the proceedings of the House of Representatives of the State of Minnesota speaking of the Canadian line as practicable, and the territories of the North West and British Columbia, as fertile, and the most valuable of the Continent; and yet men in this country, the leaders of their party, did their utmost to decry their country.

Mr. MACKENZIE denied that he had done anything to decry the country.

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER was glad he had given the hon. member an opportunity to correct himself. He quoted from an article from an American paper, copied into the *Globe* characterising the Saskatchewan country as most valuable in soil and minerals, and British Columbia as possessing rich mineral resources, magnificent climate and fine soil. It was fortunate that the truth could be ascertained even if it came from opponents. The Government had stated again and again that they themselves would not build the railway, but that it would be constructed by Companies assisted by such subsidies as would not oppress the people. It was absurd to speak of building a line to the Rocky Mountains only, a vote could not be obtained for such a purpose, but when it was proposed to extend the line to the ocean, the question assumed a very different aspect. Many great works had been accomplished in England, but what were any compared with the scheme now proposed, and he could say that already there was a motion in England to assist the measure, and there would doubtless be capitalists to take the matter in hand, and everything was in favor of the successful construction of the road. The Minister of Justice had telegraphed him to present his congratulations to his friends on the vote of yesterday.

Mr. BLAKE said the member for Lambton (Mr. Mackenzie) in his amendment had pointed out the importance of the matter the grave nature of the burden proposed to be incurred, and therefore suggested the postponement of the consideration of the matter, and it was impossible to answer those statements. Much had been heard that the railway would not cost the Dominion in cash \$100,000,000, but no one attempted to deny that the railway would cost that amount and where could the money come from but from the resources of the country. It might be in lands and it might be in money, but the result was the same, and the only argument the Minister of Militia had used was to speak of the American lines and contrast greenbacks with gold. He complained of the system of alternate sections not being followed in land grants. The argument seemed to be that they would not be compelled to perform impossibilities, but an honest man would fulfil an obligation, though the result might be bankruptcy. If rashly the national credit and faith were pledged to build that road in ten years, he said that any one who voted for that obligation with the mental reservation that they would not be compelled to fulfil the obligation unless such should be desirable was a base man. The spirit and the letter of the bond were alike binding, and the question was most serious.

The Bill was not one that could be repealed but was an irrevocable determination to build the road in ten years whatever the hazard, whatever the results, and should they not seek to communicate with their people before arriving at this irrevocable determination. It had been urged in order to secure votes that there was a reserve power of repudiation, but if the obligation was undertaken, the people would hold themselves bound by it, and could gentlemen be prepared to meet an indignant people if they incurred this responsibility without consulting those they represented, and if the gentlemen did so act, though they might go back to their people, they would not come back to that House. The question was whether the debt of the country should, at a stroke, be doubled, or whether they should have an opportunity of consulting their people before taking such a step. They had been urged to haste, but he maintained that there had been too much haste in bringing about Confederation already, and he was not anxious to ruin entirely that portion of the scheme which had been too hastily consummated. He had not heard what harm could result from postponement and as to the argument that British Columbia was hanging in the balance, he would say that while England was true to herself, the result did not lie with British Columbia, and therefore time for consideration should not be refused.

Hon. Mr. TILLEY said it was a great advantage to be able to hear both sides of a question, but he could see no very great difference in the proposition of the Government and the amendment proposed. The hon. member for Lambton after his defeat last night was obliged to adopt the more successful stand which had been taken by the hon. member for Dundas. There was no talk about the necessity of this delay from the hon. gentleman opposite before this evening. It was all very well to

ask for this delay now, but the scheme had been before the people and had been discussed in the papers for months. The terms were published in Toronto papers three months ago, and, in fact, the Union had been talked of ever since the commencement of the Confederation. In reply to the arguments of the hon. members opposite, he said that a grant of \$10,000 per mile in addition to the land grant would place the construction of the railway beyond the possibility of a doubt. There could be no difficulty in disposing of the lands at a fair price. The fertile belt was spoken of by the American writers who had visited it, as being of immense extent and of great fertility. The Northern Pacific railway looked to it for a portion of their future trade. It was, therefore, in the interest of this Dominion to construct a road through our own territory to the Pacific.

Hon. Mr. McDOUGALL (Lanark North) said the House should not be led away by claptrap speeches from the hon. gentleman opposite. Let them look at the facts. Here was a statement of Mr. Hind, an officer appointed by this Government, who explored the North West, and submitted his report thereon. This gentleman stated that in the whole of the fertile belt there were not 40,000,000 acres of available land. Taking a fertile belt in the Rocky Mountains which was not mentioned in that report, to contain 10,000,000 acres more, there were but 50,000,000 acres of any commercial or exchangeable value, in the North West. Where then were the Government lands to come from after granting large sections to the railway? The experience of the United States had shown that it was not in the interest of a country to grant its unsettled lands in large blocks to private companies. The proposition before the House was to give all the valuable lands of the North West to a company which was not yet formed. After the experience of English capitalists on Canadian railways, it was not likely that capital could be got to construct this railway. The money must be had in some way even at the risk of involving the Dominion in ruin. In reply to the statement of the Hon. Minister of Customs that this question had been before the public for some time, he would refer the hon. gentleman to the files of papers in the reading room. If he would look at them he would see that the country was startled at the gigantic proportions of this scheme. On the 27th of that month, the *ipsissima verba* of the scheme were presented to this House, and that was the first time the public had an opportunity of passing judgment on it. It was only after it was taken up and discussed in this House the other day, that it might be said to have been placed before the people. Could the hon. gentleman then deny that delay should be granted before passing this measure. It had not been presented to the House in the constitutional manner and it was only right to give the people an opportunity to express their approval or disapproval of it.

The amendment was put and lost on the following division: Yeas, 7; nays, 135.

Mr. BODWELL moved in amendment to leave out all the words after "that" and insert the following: "That the proposed terms of

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Union with *British Columbia* provide for its representation in the Senate by three Members, and in the House of Commons by six Members, while its population is about 10,000, and such representation in the House of Commons is enormously in excess of the proper number according to population, and is in violation of the fundamental principle of the fact between the Provinces, a principle which ought not to be disturbed without the assent of the Provinces, and that the said Resolutions be referred back to a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of reducing the number of representatives of *British Columbia* in the House of Commons.”

Mr. JONES (Leeds North and Grenville North) said though both sides deprecated the party considerations, he had never heard a question made so completely one of party. He did not think the country was in a position to undertake the expenditure proposed. He considered the Imperial Government ought to share in the expense of any scheme for opening up the North West. He maintained that the country was not suitable for settlement, or the present population would have been much larger. He objected to the Indians being taken into account, as they had done but little good to Canada. He was in favor of the consideration of the matter being postponed and should vote for the amendment.

Mr. BOLTON in explaining the reference made to him by the Minister of Customs, said he had not charged him with making reckless statements, but that while giving him and the Government every credit for being in earnest in desiring to construct the road, he thought it very doubtful whether a company would be found to undertake it.

Mr. MACKENZIE’S amendment was then put, and the following vote taken: Yeas, 68; nays, 85.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT believe that the Government had been led into the inconceivable blunder of naming a period for the construction of the road and the amendment he was about to propose differed from others in these respects, it did not interfere with the pledge to commence the railway, and only pledged that they would use their utmost exertions to go on with the work as fast as practicable, and it need involve but a very short delay. He moved

that the eleventh paragraph should be amended by inserting the words “use their utmost exertions” after the word “further.”

Mr. KILLAM then moved in amendment to the amendment, that the words “while its population is about 10,000” be struck out.

Mr. KILLAM’S amendment was rejected on the following division: Yeas, 43; nays 100.

Mr. BODWELL’S amendment was then put, and the vote resulted as follows: Yeas, 58; nays, 87.

Mr. BLAKE moved in amendment to leave out all the words after “that” and insert the following: “The proposed terms of Union with *British Columbia* provide for the payment by the Dominion to *British Columbia* of a yearly sum of \$100,000 in perpetuity (equal to a capital sum of \$2,000,000) for the cession of a tract of waste land on the route of the proposed Pacific Railway to aid in its construction, while any such land required for that purpose should be ceded without charge in like manner as the lands of the Dominion are to be so ceded, and that the said Resolutions be re-committed for the purpose of amending the same in accordance with this Revolution.”

The amendment was put and the vote was as follows:—Yeas, 59; nays, 84.

The first, second, and third resolutions were carried.

Hon. Sir GEORGE-É. CARTIER moved that an address, embodying the said resolutions be presented to Her Majesty and that a Select Committee, composed of Messrs. Tilley, Morris, Tupper, Chauveau, Ferguson, Savary, and the mover be appointed to draft such address.—Carried.

The Committee presented the draft address, which was received and read a first time, to be read a second time, at the next Session of the House.

The House adjourned at 1.45 a.m.