

LEGISLATURE OF ONTARIO.

Second Parliament—First Session.

THURSDAY, Dec. 14, 1871.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 8:30.

PETITIONS.

The following were presented:

Mr. McKELLAR—From Canada Southern Railway Company praying that an Act may pass to confer additional corporate powers.

Mr. TOOLEY—From County Council of Middlesex for certain amendments to Drainage Act.

Also for amendment to Jury law.

Also praying for an appropriation of the surplus.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

ATTY.-GEN. MACDONALD presented the first report of the Special Committee appointed to choose the Select Committees of the Session. The Report announced the selection of the Committee on Standing Orders.

The report was adopted.

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON said that it was not the intention of the Government to support the proposition of the hon. member for South Victoria, (Mr. S. O. Wood) That resolution would in effect do what the resolution of the hon. member for South Bruce is intended to do, but it was not open to the objections taken to it by the hon. gentleman. Under that resolution he had no doubt that legislation might take place which would effect the object of the measure without affecting the interests of the railways already undertaken. But the speech of the hon. member for South Bruce furnished as strong arguments for the consideration of the House as it was possible to offer in favor of the legislation of last Session and against his own resolution. The hon. gentleman had admitted that it was necessary for the Government to recommend to the consideration of this House aid for any particular railway, (hear, hear,) therefore the initiation of the matter must rest with the Government. A particular point had been made of the liability of the Government to be exposed to undue influence; but could not that influence be brought still more strongly under the proposed system. If any Government was in a small majority in that House, and particular hon. members were anxious to obtain aid for some particular scheme, they would endeavor to do all that was possible to influence the Government in favor of the railway, a course which would be extremely detrimental to the House. But it would not stop there. After the Government had pronounced upon it, then a secondary influence would be brought to bear upon members of the House for the purpose of getting their favor so that there would be two opportunities for log-rolling instead of one. He had regretted to hear the narrow views expressed as to the duties of legislators by the hon. gentleman. (Hear, hear, from Mr. Mackenzie.) Did that hon. gentleman who had just cheered recollect the course he had taken before the Confederation Act, when he denounced the policy of appropriations to the public works of Lower Canada. He thought this was a very similar case, and if the hon. gentleman could see any difference in the principle he must be more clear-sighted than he (Mr. Cameron) was.

Mr. MACKENZIE—No doubt of it. (Laughter).

Hon. Mr. CAMERON continued—In the amendment of the hon. member for South Victoria, it was stated that the sections of the country to be chiefly benefitted by the railway legislation of last session, contributed very largely to the revenue of the country, and that if they received this sum in its entirety they would not be receiving more than it had contributed to the revenue of the country. He thought it intolerable that the principle should be acknowledged that counties should oppose grants unless they received an equivalent for every dollar. Yet that must be the natural result of the doctrine now advanced. The hon. member for Essex would see that being chosen by a constituency he represented not that alone, but also occupied the position of trustee for the whole Province. That hon. member had referred to the circumstance that the Great Western Railway had received aid; it made no difference in the argument that the larger part of that money had been returned to the treasury. The hon. member for South Bruce had shown a great deal of skill in his manipulation of the case of the hon. member for Halton; the term of political acrobatics which had been applied to the hon. premier was really more applicable to the hon. gentlemen opposite. The Opposition had brought out a candidate against the present representative of Halton, but they now seemed to expect the support of that hon. member in a vote of non-confidence in the Ministry of the day, although the circumstances remained the same. The leader of the Opposition seldom descended to anything practical, usually taking a high sentimental view of questions. If hon. gentlemen opposite were willing to take the figures, they would find that the country had not expressed disapprobation of this Government. The hon. member for Kingston had pledged himself to support the railway policy of the Government, but the first thing they found was that the hon. gentleman for South Bruce was attacking that system, and the hon. member from Kingston was approving of that attack, but that hon. member appeared to have made a qualification that the Government should not have the right to determine to which companies the money should be given. In doing so that hon.

member was deceiving his constituents who had sent him here to support that policy. These who were in favor of aid being given to the railways must see that it was necessary that aid should be given in the most convenient and expeditious manner. It would be very important to an enterprise to be enabled to make its arrangements just at the time when the financial position of such railway was advantageous to it. The railway companies would have to bring forward evidence to that House to obtain a charter and would ask for aid. Then a certain amount would be promised, and whether the railway were constructed or not, that sum would be tied up for a length of time. The scheme proposed last session was this, that no railway should be entitled to receive aid until it showed itself to be in a position with that aid to accomplish the work designed; and then that promise of aid would enable it to make a commencement with the work, and their energies were employed to carry out their enterprise. If railway companies had to come to that House a second time, it might possibly occur that other interests would have sprung up, which might counteract the feeling previously existing in their favor; so that instead of encouraging that kind of enterprise, it would be calculated to retard and hinder it. If hon. gentlemen really wished to aid railway enterprises he did not think they would raise any absurd constitutional difficulty. No one could use that money except for the legitimate purpose intended by the Legislature, and not one dollar could be so advanced unless in accordance with the wishes of the people. Would any gentleman say that the benefit which the country would derive from these railways would not be of more consequence than this \$4,000 per mile? The most that any Government could by any possibility do would be to favor one railway enterprise over another, but probably in such a case either enterprise would be worth more to the country than the amount advanced. But the people through their representatives would have every safeguard that was necessary as to the proper disposal of the money. The money was no more likely to be improperly laid out in the case of railways than in other cases. If a railway came forward with evidence of means to accomplish its work in such a manner as to satisfy the statute, what Government could dare to refuse it the aid to which it was entitled? He believed there would thus be more complete checks on the disposal of the money than under the system proposed by the hon. member for South Bruce, whose object evidently was merely to embarrass the Government, and to catch the votes of those who were pledged to oppose the railway policy of the Government. An hon. member had informed them that three of the unrepresented constituencies were certain to send up opponents of the Government, and that the other five would probably do so, but he did not state where he obtained that information. He (Mr. Cameron) said it was not so; that 170,000 of the people were not represented in that House, and that the Opposition was endeavoring to make the people believe that the Government had not the confidence of that House. He was an advocate for representation according to population, though a Conservative, and thought it strange that hon. gentlemen should wish to prevent so large a section of the population from expressing their opinion on the conduct of the Government.

Mr. BLAKE rose to order. He thought the hon. gentleman was speaking to Mr. McCall's amendment, which had been rejected by the House.

Mr. CAMERON thought he was in order in referring to the subject of the unrepresented constituencies when a reference to them was necessary to the argument. The conduct of the hon. gentleman was not worthy of the leader of the Opposition. He had referred to the smallness of the constituency represented by a member of the Government, but the representatives of small constituencies was entitled to as much respect in that House as any other.

Mr. MCKENZIE explained that he had never said they were not.

Mr. CAMERON continued—Hon. gentleman on the opposite side of the House claimed to be political perists who desired the best interests of the country. The hon. gentlemen seemed to suppose that the Conservative party was dead; but the only ground for his statement lay in the fact that since confederation was brought about they had endeavored to lose sight of the old party lines of Reformer and Conservative, and to judge measures on principle alone. With regard to the appointments for office the Government had never considered whether a man was a Reformer or a Conservative; the only question was whether he was fit or entitled to it. He then proceeded to show how the hon. member for Bruce had obtained Conservative support in Bruce, and referred to the *Globe* of the 8th of February last, in which had appeared a long report of the speech of that hon. gentleman in reference to the railway policy covering four columns, while the speeches of Mr. Wood and himself which followed had been condensed into a mere statement of their having spoken.

Mr. BLAKE said that fuller reports appeared next day.

Mr. CAMERON said that wasn't the point. That made no difference in the way the case went before the County of Bruce, and the rest of the country, the people of which were led to believe that the arguments of the hon. member were unanswerable. The different points of the case were not read side by side, nor along with the editorial which appeared on the subject. The paper went in to win for its party—a party which believed and acted upon the principle that the end justifies the means. He would make no complaint if he found the gentlemen opposite confining themselves to truth and fact, but would willingly make way for them, but there would be no satisfaction under present circumstances in allowing these gentlemen to come over.

Mr. BLAKE—I will go over by the votes of the House.

Mr. CAMERON said that was just what he desired to try, but the hon. member wanted to come over before the House was full. The Opposition chiefs knew that