

I think the debate in Parliament has been a great advantage in familiarizing hon. members with this matter. I am an official of the Montreal, Ottawa and Georgian Bay Canal Company and speak for that Company.

That Company, as you know, was chartered in 1894 as a Canal Company. It has been duly organized under the terms of its Charter and the Railway Act to which it is subject, the exists as a Canal Company.

For the information of this committee and of the Press and the public at large, it might be as well to state here that every unrepealed clause ever applicable to this Company is in force and applies now. This is the fact and was in effect so stated by the Hon. leader of the opposition. Nothing has been left out of this Bill and any other statement—and there have been many—is a direct misstatement of fact.

But if any hon. member feels any doubt on the point, the Company would be pleased to accept any amendment re-enacting any unrepealed clause or all the unrepealed clauses of previous legislation affecting the Company.

The original Charter as amended by Parliament granted certain specific definite statutory rights and authorities to the Canal Company to build, own and operate the Georgian Bay Canal, all of which were subject to two conditions. The first and primary condition is—

Section 18.

Before the Company shall break ground or commence the construction of any of the canals or works hereby authorized, the plans, locations, dimensions, and all necessary particulars of such canals and other works hereby authorized shall have been submitted to and have received the approval of the Governor in Council.

Thus the grant of authority to build, own and operate the Georgian Bay Canal was definite and final, the right vested in the Company with the granting of the Charter. But by the above clause, the exercise of that right was postponed until the plans were passed.

It was clearly not intended by Parliament that the Governor in Council could nullify a statute of Canada by failure to pass the plans, neither was it intended that the Company formally invested by Parliament with these rights, should lose or forfeit same by failure of the Governor in Council to pass the plans.

What was clearly intended was that the Executive should exercise its function in the public interest by seeing to it in advance, in the public interest, that structures placed on this Public Highway should be fit and suitable structures.

That rather raises a point on a question which was asked a few moments ago with regard to these plans. I want to refer to a statement which was made by Mr. Garland (Bow River) in his speech in the House of Commons, in which he read a long report from K. M. Cameron, Chief Engineer of the Department of Public Works, dated January 2nd, 1925. There is no use reading it; it is on Hansard on pages 1487 and 1488 of the unrevised edition.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: You had better read it.

Mr. W. SIFTON: It is a whole page, Sir George. It mentions objections to the plans which we filed. Now, I was vice-president of this company, and I filed these plans personally with the government, and I personally made application to the two Ministers concerned, to the Minister of Railways and Canals, and the Minister of Public Works, and I interviewed various officials in those departments, and when this document was read in the House of Commons it was the first time I ever heard of it, or that any official of the company had ever heard of it. I never had a copy, and we never had any objections made to our plans.

[Mr. Wynne Sifton.]