

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. The minister may not know about the report; but it would assist the Committee and assist the minister in the consideration of this matter if the report containing the objections of the railway people were in the hands of the House before we proceed to consider the Bill. The hon. gentleman may or may not have seen the report.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I assure the hon. gentleman I have not.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. I accept the hon. gentleman's statement, and take it for granted that he has not seen the report, but others than the minister are really in possession of the report. The fact that the minister has not seen the report does not prevent others from having seen it. Perhaps it would be better to wait for that report before we proceed with the consideration of the Bill.

Mr. A. E. KEMP (East Toronto). The two parties who are interested in this Bill are the railways and the public. It was reported two or three weeks ago in the press that the railways would make very important representations to the government in regard to the terms of this Act. They have since been working on it, I am informed. I am also informed that certain bodies representing the general public have been corresponding with the Minister of Railways, telling him that they desire to be heard in respect to this Bill. They have noticed in the press reports that the railways intend to ask for amendments, and they have been waiting until the government were in possession of these amendments before they came themselves to interview the government. I understand that the Toronto Board of Trade are in that position. They have been making representations to the Minister of Railways, and desiring to be heard after the railways have made their representations. If the Minister of Railways sees fit to adopt these amendments which the railway people produce, then the board of trade desire to be heard in regard to these amendments. But they do not want to make two trips here for that purpose. Perhaps the Minister of Railways may have representations from other bodies representing the general public, as we know that the public are a good deal interested in this Bill. I would urge the minister of Railways to postpone the second reading of this Bill until he has the representations of the railways, and until he hears the organizations representing the public, neither of which bodies have yet been heard by him. It seems to me that it would be a waste of time to go on and read this Bill a second time, and consider it clause by clause, until we have heard more from the parties interested. I hope the hon. minister will give these organizations which desire it an opportunity to be heard.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. Mr. Speaker, I may say to the hon. gentleman (Mr. Kemp), that I was communicated with by the Toronto Board of Trade and I am not sure but that there may have been one or two other associations, perhaps the Manufacturers Association, and perhaps some other associations which also communicated with me; but I know the Toronto Board of Trade has done so and I stated to them what had transpired. I very frankly stated to them that I had asked the railway people to present to me, if they could, a statement of their criticisms upon the Bill, and when I received that I said that I would put them in possession of it. Then, I thought would be the proper time for them, if they wished to formulate any views, to do so. I have not received that information from the railway companies. It is apparent that these gentlemen have been communicating in the wrong direction. Instead of communicating with the Minister of Railways and Canals, they should have communicated with the ex-Minister of Railways and Canals because the ex-minister has been taken into the confidence of these gentlemen to a much larger degree than the present minister has been favoured. Therefore, I have not been able to carry out my undertaking with them. If I have failed I have not failed for any other reason than for that stated. I still adhere to the view that nothing would be lost and that everything would be gained by proceeding into Committee on this Bill. I know very well the clauses of the Bill that will invoke the most criticism and I am sure the House will accept my statement and that when in committee the committee will accept the statement I make, that I will not press any of the clauses which I have reason to believe are likely to be contested in the interests of the railway companies or anybody else; but that I will be willing to afford them every opportunity of being heard.

Mr. KEMP. I do not think the hon. minister's mind is sufficiently ingenious to imagine what the Toronto Board of Trade have in their minds in regard to this Bill. I have been informed that they have a great many amendments to suggest and I think we would only lose time by proceeding with the Bill.

Mr. SAMUEL BARKER (Hamilton). Mr. Speaker, I wish to call the attention of the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals (Hon. Mr. Blair) to another difficulty in discussing this measure; that is, if the hon. minister proposes to go on with the clauses relating to the commission. Personally, I am in favour of the principle of a commission, but I doubt whether I can vote for the clauses as they stand until I know how far the clauses will extend; that is to say, whether they are to be binding upon all the railways of this Dominion, or only a few of them. Strongly as I feel there would be