

mittee—largely because the members of the Railway Committee did not understand the exact nature of this Bill; they were misled—I do not mean to say deliberately misled—but misled by statements like those made by the hon. member from Alma to-day. The impression was left on their minds that this was a measure which placed the railway companies in the hands of any ill-natured individual. That is not the case. There is one fact which the hon. gentleman has not adverted to, that in his own Province the substance of this Bill is law to-day; and the hon. gentleman gets up here and says that a law which is good and beneficial, and in the public interests of the Province of Quebec—

HON. MR. OGILVIE—I did not say so.

HON. MR. POWER—That is practically what the hon. gentleman says.

HON. MR. OGILVIE—Do not put words into my mouth; you have been doing so ever since you rose.

HON. MR. POWER—I simply give the substance of what the hon. gentleman's argument is. The substance of this Bill is law to-day in the Province of Quebec, under the Consolidated Statutes of Old Canada, and under the Code of Quebec; and the hon. gentleman, representing a division of the Province of Quebec, rises here and asks us not to extend this law, which is, as I said, useful and beneficial and proper in Quebec, to the whole Dominion. I hope the House will not, after having passed this Bill almost unanimously last year, and read it the second time this year without any division, at the last stage stultify itself by throwing it out to-day.

HON. MR. VIDAL—I do not think my hon. friend from Halifax has seen the arguments that have been advanced against the passage of this Bill. I concur very largely in the statements made by the hon. member from Algoma, with reference to there being no necessity for this Bill, and I think there is also some very serious question whether it would not be injurious rather than helpful to the public interest. My hon. friend spoke as though we, in this House, were in a very especial manner the representatives and guardians of the people's rights. I trust we are so. Although not directly responsible to the

people in the positions we hold here, I believe every member of this House has a sincere and earnest desire to advance the general interest of the community, and guard private interests—just as much so as members of the other House. But a contrast is drawn between our position and that of the Railway Committee. I hold that it entirely fails.

HON. MR. POWER—I did not draw any contrast at all.

HON. MR. VIDAL—The hon. gentleman certainly drew the contrast most decidedly—that we were responsible, but that the Railway Committee was not responsible.

HON. MR. POWER—I did not say anything of the sort.

HON. MR. VIDAL—I understood the hon. gentleman to say so. I am very glad to hear I was mistaken. I think that the Railway Committee is more responsible to the people than even this House is, and I think that the Railway Committee in all their past acts have shown a strong desire to maintain the interests of the public, even against those of the Railway Committee. In the committee a reference was made to a question which I put to the promoter of the Bill. I should like to explain to the House my motive for doing so, because on it hangs the only question which we ought to decide. Is this a Bill that ought to carry in this House? In the committee we had the advantage of the presence, the information and the advice of an experienced lawyer, a gentleman who has had great legislative experience both in the Provincial and Dominion Legislatures, who has had a great deal to do with railway legislation and railway cases in the country, and who was himself for a time a member of the Executive, having authority over these things. He told us, and stated most distinctly, that the present law meets every requirement which is supposed to be met by the Bill that is now before the House. That is a very important statement—that everything which is attempted to be obtained by this Bill now presented to the House is already attainable by proper process under the existing law. That led me to ask the question where this law failed, and I asked the promoter of the Bill: "Can you name to me a single instance where the