

not even name the head office. But suddenly, to-day, without any apparent reason, he slips in this amendment concerning forty-four branch lines. Now there are fifty seats in Western Canada, six of them in cities, and forty-four in the rural districts. I have not had an opportunity of looking at this amendment, and the minister asks us to empower the Government to build, I presume, one line of railway in every one of those forty-four rural constituencies.

Mr. J. M. DOUGLAS: Is the hon. gentleman opposed to the building of these branch lines in Western Canada?

Mr. CAHILL: I want to know where they are to be built. I am not as willing as my hon. friend to swallow this thing holus-bolus.

Mr. J. M. DOUGLAS: I have looked through the schedule of the lines in the province of Alberta, and six or seven of the eighteen lines are already under construction and serving the people.

Mr. CAHILL: Why does not the Government give the Committee full information? We are getting more enlightenment from the back benches than from the front, and may get somewhere if the back benchers will continue to enlighten us.

Mr. BOYS: Do you not accept the word of the Minister of Railways that when the schedule is reached you will be able to discuss all these charters?

Mr. CAHILL: I never heard of it.

Mr. BOYS: It has been stated on his honour that all these charters can be discussed then.

Mr. CAHILL: When the minister is proposing a Bill he always refers to his Estimates and says: That is the place to ask questions. When we come to his Estimates, he says: Why not discuss this on the Bill?

Mr. KEEFER: Did you not hear the Minister of Railways say that there will be a full opportunity to take these matters into consideration when we come to deal with the schedule, and did you not hear the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Meighen) say the same thing?

Mr. CAHILL: What is the sense of passing the section if we have to go back and discuss it again?

Mr. BOYS: What is the objection to the course suggested and guaranteed by the minister?

Mr. CAHILL: What is the question?

Mr. BOYS: He says that when you come to the schedule you will get an opportunity of discussing every one of these charters and that the officials will be here and lay before the Committee all the information the hon. gentleman wants.

Mr. CAHILL: What is the necessity of passing this clause if you are going to deal with the schedule later on? Why not discuss this question in the Railway Committee where it belongs and where each of us can ask the officers any questions we wish to put to them?

Mr. BOYS: In the practice of the House, I do not think a Government Bill goes to the Railway Committee.

Mr. CAHILL: This is not a Government Bill; the minister is organizing a company.

Mr. BOYS: It is a Bill introduced by the Government.

Mr. CAHILL: The Government will not even audit the accounts. They are simply handing it over to Mackenzie and Mann to look after.

Mr. J. M. DOUGLAS: Is the hon. gentleman aware that nearly every one of these charters is a provincial one and not under federal control in so far as extension is concerned?

Mr. CAHILL: That is also news to me, and I am thankful for it. If the Government will give us the information we are looking for we will find out something about the Bill eventually.

Mr. BOYS: What information do you really want?

Mr. CAHILL: I have asked the Minister of Railways several times why not go to the Railway Committee?

Mr. BOYS: The answer is that it is not the practice of this House.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I beg pardon; I was in Parliament when the National Transcontinental Railway Bill was introduced and it went direct to the Railway Committee.

Mr. BOYS: I think the hon. gentleman will agree that it is not the practice of the House to refer Government Bills to the Railway Committee. Although that may have been true on a former occasion, it has not been the practice since this Government has been in office.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I gave you one instance.