

Hon. Mr. BEIQUE—Both in the future and in the past.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—We are disturbing conditions of which we know nothing whatever. Arrangements no doubt have been made by municipalities, and companies have got concessions under Acts of local legislatures, and it is an arbitrary act on our part to interfere. The important companies are the Great North-western Company—doing the largest amount of business. I presume—and the Montreal Company which is merged in the Great North-western.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—Surely this does not apply to telegraph companies?

Hon. Mr. BEIQUE—It only applies to railway companies.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—The section seemed to me to apply to all telegraph companies. We have nothing to do with light, heat and power wires. We do not give railway companies the right to supply heat, light and power.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—Nearly all the special Acts we are putting through now give that power to railway companies.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—I would certainly object that all the cities, towns and incorporated villages of Canada should be subject to the board. There is no sense in that. Every city or town, and every incorporated village, are to be subject to the wants and desires of that board. I say it is a most wild proposal. These towns and villages are subject to municipal and provincial laws, and subject to the parliamentary law of this Dominion, and why they should be subject to the will and wishes of this board I cannot understand. It is not fair to subject all our towns, cities and villages to their control.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN (de Lanaudière)—I am afraid my hon. friend on my left has not exactly grasped the amendment proposed by the hon. gentleman from de Salaberry. As I understand it, the amendment simply provides that upon the application of a corporation or municipality, the board may order the railway company to do certain things.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—Exactly, and it may not.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—So the municipality in going to the board, go there of their own free will and apply for certain things from the board. I do not see anything objectionable in the clause. It is a protection to the municipality. If we have any confidence in the board at all, we must acknowledge that it will do what is right, and if they consider the municipality has a right to ask the railway company to put wires underground, the board will then make an order and that railway company will carry on the work as required by the board, and the municipality will have obtained what they were seeking. I do not think it is taking any advantage of municipalities; on the contrary, it is giving them an advantage in applying to the board.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—I have had experience in municipalities and I would decidedly object to any town council coming to a board in matters which should be governed by the council alone. Why should you make village mayors come to Ottawa from all sections of the Dominion to seek rights which they have themselves? Why submit the welfare of a municipality to the will or whim of anybody else? They have councils to govern their own local affairs, and it is enough for the ratepayers of a municipality to have to seek redress at the hands of their representatives without forcing them to come to such a body as this railway commission. I say it is not right, and it is giving this board too much power. It is giving them not only control of parliamentary law, but control of municipal regulations and municipal wants and desires, and I say it is not right to put the destinies of each of these municipalities in the hands of this board.

Hon. Mr. POWER—The hon. gentleman from Hawkesbury misapprehends the effect of this amendment. At the present time the railway company—that is the case dealt with here—has the right, either under this or under a special Act, to erect poles and string wires on them in the municipality.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—Where the municipality desires it.