

and it has been looked forward to as a panacea for some of the evils under which the public are laboring, especially discriminating rates between competitive and non-competitive points, the amalgamations of companies, and the creation of monopolies. I have glanced through the Bill now before the House, and I fail to find anything in it likely to work a cure for these various grievances. The Bill seems to me to be confined to two classes of provisions: one for settling disputes between railway companies and municipalities as to right of way, crossings, and so on, and the other for settling disputes between railway companies as to their traffic arrangements and their crossings, and the few other points of that kind; but I only find one clause containing the slightest reference to those various questions of a public character to which the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, and some others on this side of the House, have referred. There is only one clause which touches the grievances under which the public may be supposed to be laboring at the hands of railway companies, and that is the 27th clause of the Bill, which recites that doubts have arisen as to the validity of what is known as a joint purse arrangement, or the working of different lines by a joint committee, and declares that arrangements of this kind shall not be allowed, and makes some other provisions which, as I understand them, amount to nothing, and would not in any way remedy the grievances, or prevent, if the Bill went into practical effect, the accomplishment of the joint purse arrangement, if two companies sought to enter into it. There is not one word to prevent the amalgamation of companies for the best of all reasons, for the hon. gentleman is too experienced not to know that all our legislation in this direction cannot possibly prevent amalgamation in fact. We may prevent amalgamation in name, but to prevent amalgamation in fact, or one company acquiring control of the stock or bonds of another, none of our legislation can possibly reach so long as companies are controlled by the holders of the stock and bonds, which is the case, as is well known, of every railway company in existence unless they are Government railways. I think, therefore, this so-called Railway Commission Bill, about which much has been said, would turn out to be empty thunder, as far as the railway companies are concerned, and would give no relief to the public, but would utterly fail to attain the object for which the public sought for and hope to obtain at the hands of Parliament. But there are a great many difficulties which environ the way to legislation on this subject, as the Minister of Railways pointed out, and no doubt the hon. member when drafting this Bill—and when expunging, if I recollect rightly, some of the clauses in the Bill of last Session,—met with these difficulties. He doubtless felt the subject was one very difficult to deal with, and that it was utterly impossible to draw a Bill that this Parliament would pass, which would effectually reach the objects which, no doubt, he had in view. I doubt if he carries any other cure for those evils under which the public or some portion of the public in some places suffer than that proposed by the hon. member for Norfolk (Mr. Wallace), that the Government buy out the railways of the country and run them themselves. I confess I am not prepared to adopt that policy; I think the country is not prepared to adopt it, but that the people would far rather labor under the comparatively trifling grievances that now exist, than enter into the wholesale business of buying up and running railways from one end of the country to the other. There is another difficulty to which the Minister of Railways did not refer, and it is especially applicable to Canada. What I refer to is this: the Government still own the Intercolonial. Are the Government prepared to submit the Intercolonial, a Government work, to the operation of the Bill and bring it under the control of the proposed Railway Commission;

and if not, is that road to be excluded and excepted from the control of the Commission, while every other road is to be subject to it? That railway carries on competition with other railways in different parts of the Dominion, and is it proposed to exclude it from the jurisdiction of the Commissioners while all other railways are to be placed under them? Of course the hon. member has endeavored to touch this point of provincial railways. He has only touched it. He proposed when any disputes arise between a Dominion and provincial railway, that, with the consent, of course, of the provincial railway or the Legislature governing it, two of the Dominion Railway Commissioners should be allowed to sit with one representing the provincial railway. I do not think any provincial railway will ever be willing to go into an arbitration of that kind with two of the Judges representing in fact, and appointed by the other interested, and the provincial road nominating only one. That mode of dealing with the difficulty will be found to be utterly impracticable, as in fact the whole of the Bill will be found to be. The Bill proposed to settle difficulties between railways—a matter in which the public took no interest—and difficulties between companies and municipalities, which have really no existence. None of the latter have ever been worthy of discussion, or in regard to which the slightest difficulty has been experienced in settling them, with the exception of that respecting the frontage in Toronto and the right of way down to the city. That was a matter of dispute between railway companies, and the city of Toronto took a very secondary interest in the matter; but the dispute was settled in as satisfactory a manner by the tribunal now established, the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, as it could have possibly been decided by the Railway Commission to be named under this Bill. The hon. member for Elgin (Mr. Casey) talked a good deal about the Credit Valley road, as did other hon. gentlemen, but instead of declaring that this House should legislate in regard to that road, and prevent it being amalgamated with the Great Western, I think it would have been better if he had given his suggestions to another parliamentary tribunal, over which, perhaps, he has more influence and control, and in which he certainly has more political allies than in this House. The Credit Valley is entirely under the control of the Ontario Legislature; it has no power to amalgamate with the Great Western, and it is not likely to obtain such power from the Ontario Legislature at present; so any amalgamation between it and the Great Western is utterly impossible as the law stands, and, at all events, it is a matter over which we have no control whatever. If the shareholders in another company thought fit to acquire bonds or stocks of the Credit Valley, I suppose they could do so, and we could not legislate to prevent them. We cannot prevent capitalists buying stock or bonds of any company, and, so far as our legislative power goes, we are without any power whatever with regard to the Credit Valley Railway, and, as a matter of fact, there has been no amalgamation, and the Great Western does not possess any control over that road. While speaking of the Ontario Legislature, I would suggest that that tribunal does not always deal with these questions in the same spirit. If the Credit Valley wanted amalgamation they could not secure it, but when, strange to say, an application is made by the Grand Trunk for amalgamation or anything else, they get it at once by a sweeping majority. There is no opposition to anything the Grand Trunk wants. When a few days ago the Great Western and capitalists applied unitedly for the incorporation of the company to build a central station, which every one knows is an absolute necessity in Toronto, the Grand Trunk came forward and said: "You must not have a charter as it will interfere with our Union station." The Railway Committee declared the preamble not proved by a majority of thirty.