

Mr. FIELDING. It gives them if the government claim them. It is an obligation on the Grand Trunk or on the Canada Atlantic Railway, but it is not an obligation for the government to pay for that which they do not use.

Mr. BARKER. The hon. gentleman says 'if.' But there is no 'if' in the Bill, it is an absolute power.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. There is no obligation to exercise it, surely.

Mr. BARKER. Does the Minister of Justice mean to say that we are to put in an Act of parliament power to do a thing and not exercise it?

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Undoubtedly. I can point the hon. gentleman a dozen clauses of the Railway Act which give actually the same powers, and these powers are not exercised. I think this discussion evidently demonstrates the wisdom of discussing Bills after they are printed, so that we may have some knowledge of their contents.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. That is not the practice which has been followed lately.

Mr. BARKER. It demonstrates that they should be printed before they are introduced.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Then I think we had better introduce a new rule.

Mr. FOSTER. It demonstrates the unwisdom of the 21st of February.

Mr. BARKER. I would like to point out that the government are seeking these running powers to do a through-traffic which will necessitate the very thing the First Minister said would be ruinous if you owned the road. The First Minister told us two years ago, in discussing another matter, that if we were to acquire this railway we would have to build ships and hotels, and all that sort of thing; and yet you are going to carry a freight and passenger traffic over the railway before you have any ships or hotels. What advantage would it be to you? The owning company will build the ships and own them, and are they going to give you the traffic after bringing it there in their ships? Common sense would tell the government that if they want any traffic they had better own the road, and give the rights to the Grand Trunk on any other company that wants them. You may find that when you are there with a privilege to exercise running powers—which is a very difficult power to exercise at any time—you will find obstructions in your way; the Grand Trunk are not going to go out of their way to facilitate your business when, by a little trouble they will get the business themselves; while if you owned the road, the government of the country could treat the Grand

Mr. BARKER.

Trunk, the Canadian Northern, or any other road, with perfect fairness. But you are putting yourselves in the hands of a rival company, a rival carrier, whose interest will be to prevent you getting one dollar's worth of traffic.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I think the country settled that question on the 4th of November last.

Mr. BARKER. Evidently this question has not been settled before introducing this Bill. There is a further point. This Bill on the face of it enables the government to carry through-freight only.

Mr. FIELDING. And local passenger traffic.

Mr. BARKER. I think there is no serious question about passengers on that road for some time to come, but the freight is important. Now the Grand Trunk owning the road will have its own through-freight and the local freight, which latter is the fat freight, on which there is good profit. The Grand Trunk will have both the local freight, which is the profitable freight, and through-freight; while the government will have only skim milk through-freight which, under any circumstances, is likely to give a very thin profit indeed. The government is going to carry it for some 375 miles in rivalry with a company that has both classes of freight. I think that any business corporation that had a opportunity to have both lines of traffic and preferred to take one, would not be regarded as a very keen business concern. The Grand Trunk can make money over that road when the government must lose, and yet voluntarily you take the losing position. Now the Grand Trunk cannot acquire the Canada Atlantic without the permission of parliament. If the Grand Trunk seek authority to acquire it, there is no obligation on the part of the country to give it that authority, not the slightest obligation to give any corporation power to buy up another corporation. We have only to hold our hands and they cannot do it, by simply remaining quiet, by holding our hands, we can prevent that line being bought up away from the Intercolonial. We are asked by another Bill before the House to facilitate the Grand Trunk in acquiring that property, and then we are to take the subordinate position. It seems to me an absurd thing from a business point of view.

Mr. INGRAM. I quite agree with the Minister of Justice when he says that the discussion of a Bill before it is printed is not profitable. But we are placed in that position by reason of other legislation that is likely to come before this House to-day, which may tell us something in connection with the Bill introduced by the Minister of Railways and Canals. The hon. gentleman has not given a very elaborate discussion in