

occasion for it, we offered suggestions. We have not gone behind the door to do so, but at the right time and place, when the House was in committee and the hon. gentleman and his supporters had the right to criticise our suggestions, we have expressed our opinions and offered amendments when we found what we believed to have been flaws in the Bill. We did so in the most respectful and friendly way. Some of our amendments were accepted in the best possible spirit by the hon. minister, and we believe that he accepted them because he considered they would improve his measure. We feel confident that the hon. minister is actuated solely by the desire to make this Bill as perfect as possible. In his closing remarks, the hon. gentleman said that what he proposed to do was to secure to corporations the rights which they had received in years gone by from this parliament. I do not think that, if the hon. minister had confined himself to the amendment which he now accepts, five minutes of the time of this committee would have been occupied with any further discussion upon clause 184. What we have objected to is the fact that the hon. minister, when he entered the chamber, distributed among us a number of amendments, amongst them an amendment to clause 184, the effect of which would have been to destroy that recognition of municipal rights which he was good enough to make some eight or ten days ago; and I take it that he has been so impressed with the arguments or suggestions from this side that he has gracefully withdrawn the amendment he presented in the first place and has submitted a further amendment protecting the rights of the companies incorporated by this parliament some time ago. We on this side have no desire to take away from any company the rights it has legally acquired from any legislative body with power to grant them; and when he declared that the rights of one company, the Montreal Terminal, might be injuriously affected by the amendment he accepted ten days ago, my hon. friend from Hamilton (Mr. Barker) suggested that he should make a special provision to protect the rights of that company. We have not the slightest desire to interfere with whatever rights the Terminal has legally obtained, and join with the hon. gentleman in protecting them, but we thought—and the hon. gentleman will not contradict the statement—that if the amendment he presented to section 184 had been allowed to go, every municipality in the country would have been at the mercy of the railway commission and every municipal right might have been taken away by the action of the commissioners. The hon. minister before recess made reference to the city of Toronto. I do not know whether he intended to be sarcastic or flattering, but I would make this suggestion. I would, on behalf of the mayor and cor-

poration and citizens of Toronto, invite him to come to that city and take a trip over its tram-car system. All the provisions in connection with that system were prepared by the engineer and solicitor of the city, the contract was drawn by the city attorney, the system was laid down on the conditions imposed by the city, and we have the best street railway system in America to-day; and I think that the municipality gets a greater revenue from it, considering its mileage and traffic, than any other municipality does from any other street railway. I do not intend to make a long speech and be put in the category of other hon. gentlemen whom the hon. minister has chastised and stigmatised most unfairly. If the amendment which he suggested to section 184 became law, the privileges we are enjoying in Toronto to-day would practically disappear.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. No.

MR. CLARKE. Will the hon. gentleman permit me to tell him that I know something about the situation in Toronto, and I have the temerity to say that I know as much at least about it as the hon. gentleman. Let me tell him that if power were given the board of commissioners to allow other tramways to come into the city of Toronto, the value of the franchise we have there now would be destroyed. Because that franchise was made valuable by the fact that the company leasing it has the exclusive right to operate an electric car service into and through the city.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. Does the hon. gentleman know how many companies are authorized by this parliament to lay down street railway lines in Toronto?

MR. CLARKE. I do not know of any company.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. In that case this section would not have any application to Toronto whatever.

MR. CLARKE. I do know that attempts are being made, and have been successfully made, to get legislation through this parliament declaring works to be for the general advantage of Canada, which are purely and entirely provincial in their nature. I want to tell the hon. gentleman that the sole object of these promoters in coming to this parliament and having these enterprises declared to be for the general advantage of Canada is to escape the obligations which the province and the municipalities would impose upon them. No one knows that better than the hon. minister himself. If the right to operate street railways is to be declared for the general advantage of Canada, where will legislation of this kind stop?