

gentleman will take the trouble to read this Bill through he will find that it does not empower municipalities to do anything of the sort. As it is now, the municipality can bring the railway company to Ottawa. Under this Bill, the municipality in the first instance gives the company notice that, in the opinion of the municipal council, there should be a culvert at or near a certain point on the line. I dare say that in most cases the railway company, when they come to look at the matter, will be satisfied that the municipal council is right, and there will be no more litigation or trouble about it; the railway company will put in the culvert. If, on the other hand, the municipal council happen to be unreasonable in their demand, then the railway company, under this Bill, can go to the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, and if the demand of the municipality is unreasonable, that committee will not grant it. I think the rights of the railway companies are amply protected. Further, this Bill does not apply to cases where the expenditure involved will be large. It only applies to cases where the expenditure will be under \$800. I fail to see how the Bill can injure seriously any railway company; and I do not see any serious objection to it all. The hon. gentleman from Alma division, with great impressiveness and with a certain mystery of manner, intimated that he had from the very best authority information that a large number of railway accidents occurred from defective culverts. My own impression is that if such is the case it is little to the credit of the railway companies. It is their duty to construct the culverts in a workmanlike manner, as they construct the remainder of their roads. If the road is not properly ballasted or the sleepers are too old accidents will happen just as readily as from inferior culverts; and it is the duty of the railway company to have not only the culverts but the sleepers and track in a proper condition.

HON. MR. OGILVIE—They can see one; they cannot see the other.

HON. MR. POWER—It is the duty of the track-master to examine the culverts as well as the track. The hon. gentleman spoke as though the effect of this Bill would be to increase the risk of accident.

HON. MR. SCOTT—Hear, hear.

HON. MR. POWER—I hear indications of approval of that sentiment from the hon. member from Ottawa. I think both these hon. gentlemen know enough about railways to be aware that all accidents which happen from too much water are not from the falling in of culverts, but that washouts often happen, and that they are likely to happen, because there is not any culvert and no outlet for the water. A washout is just as likely to happen from that cause as from the falling in of a culvert. The hon. gentleman from Alma division spoke as though we were under a very great obligation to the railway companies here.

HON. MR. OGILVIE—No; I did not.

HON. MR. POWER—It may be that a number of these railway companies have gone into the business of railway construction from purely philanthropic motives, but I do not know that any one has seriously alleged that. If the railway companies have benefited Canada, they have, as a rule, benefited themselves; and, at any rate, if we have railways in this country, if we subsidize railway companies and give them important privileges, is it not for the benefit of this country? We do not do that for the benefit of the railway companies, but in the public interest. There is not the slightest doubt that, when a railway runs through a country where there is a large fall of water, it is necessary that there should be culverts at reasonable intervals, and that is about all that this Bill provides—that the railway company should not unreasonably refuse to make culverts. If a municipality out in British Columbia, or down in the Island of Cape Breton, finds that the water has been dammed back on the lands of the farmers by the railway, the railway company feel that they can, to a certain extent, defy these people, because they are not likely to come to Ottawa to the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, and the railway company calculates on that. The argument was used that the Bill had been thrown out in the House of Commons last year, and therefore we should not pass it again. I think that is a most extraordinary doctrine. We passed it here last year almost unanimously; it went down to the other House at a rather late period of the Session; it was defeated there—not in the House, but in the Railway Com-