

one build railways according to the general law—

Hon. Mr. POWER—Is the hon. gentleman opposing the discharging of the order of the day?

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—No, but I am in order. I think our system is absolutely wrong. No doubt, many of these charters are obtained from parliament for the purpose of preventing other promoters from actually building the lines. I feel very strongly on the subject. There is no doubt that many companies and many promoters come here for this very purpose. I have been in the Senate for many years, and I know that the same people are constantly applying for charters with a view to speculating in them. They are nothing else but charter mongers. Parliament should put a stop to the practice by changing the law so that, as in the state of New York, simply by filing plans and profiles in the office, the Commissioner of Public Works would allow a company to be incorporated, and go on and build. When they have that authority, they have powers of expropriation according to the General Railway Act, the same as other companies. If parliament will persist in giving these people charters, they should exact something in return, that they shall file plans or go to some expense before getting their charter. I am sure it would not be too much to ask, supposing an engineer was asked for a report saying that he simply walked over the route and knew it was feasible to build a railway there; but, as we know, there is nothing surer than the fact that people apply for these charters—for instance, if there is a large railway like the Canadian Pacific going in one direction, there are any number of charter mongers trying to get branch lines, and then they go and obtain subsidies on the branch lines from the local and federal governments, and, after they have obtained the subsidies they will say, 'We have had land subsidies, and we have had government guarantees granted to us.' Now, what will this big company do? We know how many times the Canadian Pacific railway have actually had to pay the charter mongers, not only for their charter, but

also for the privilege to act, and for handing over to the Canadian Pacific railway the subsidies they had obtained just because they happened to be friends of the government at the time. All this can be remedied by having the Railway Act amended so that anybody could build a railway, provided he complies with certain regulations, the same as with letters patent, or that, before you grant a charter, which practically gives a monopoly to certain companies to build over certain territory, they supply the parliament with plans and a profile and a report, and let them demonstrate, as is required in England, that some financial concern will come and say that the promoters are, so far as they know, able to carry out their undertaking.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—I am inclined to think that, if we followed the precedents laid down last night in passing a Bill, it would not be necessary even to apply for a charter for a railway because we had a Bill last night with respect to incorporating railway companies, and it was worked in as a government measure. So far as charter mongers are concerned, I think that the method which has been adopted for the last few years in both Houses, of giving charters to practically everybody who applies for them, has done away with the value of the charters, and, in fact, I am inclined to think it is because charters have become valueless that we have this legislation suggested at the present time.

Hon. Mr. BOYER—How would it do to apply prohibition to charters, and, instead of making the fee \$200 for a charter make it \$500? Everything is expensive in our days, including ink and paper, and, if we raise the fee to \$500, or \$1,000, that would remedy the evil.

Hon. Mr. BEIQUE—A good deal has been said about charter mongers, but we must bear in mind that we are living in a new country, and, if it had not been for what the hon. gentleman describes as charter mongers, many of our railways would not have been constructed. It was through the efforts of charter mongers that many schemes were placed before capitalists for