

tive of the Bill is purely humanitarian, and that motive alone is worthy of consideration. On the other hand, the great railway corporations have shown that there are to the carrying out of this idea several objections which cannot lightly be set aside. The best suggestion for dealing with this question is the one made by the mover of the Bill: to have it referred to the Railway Committee. That is the best place to have the question thoroughly threshed out. I apprehend that the idea which is at the basis of the Bill is a right one after all, and that, sooner or later, it will become law. The question, in my estimation, so far as I understand it, is whether the time has arrived when such legislation should be placed on the statute-book. The Railway Committee, I repeat, is the best place where this subject can be threshed out, and so I assent to the second reading of the Bill, with a view to having it referred to that committee.

Mr. TISDALE. I have no objection to again state the reasons why I oppose this Bill, but it will not be necessary to repeat the lengthy remarks I offered on a former occasion, because they will be in the recollection of some hon. members of this House. On the last occasion this Bill was introduced I opposed the principle. I quite agree with the suggestion thrown out by the leader of the Government, that the Railway Committee is the better place to fight out this issue, if it has to be fought out again. The whole principle of the Bill was very carefully considered on a former occasion, not on the Bill introduced by the hon. member for East York (Mr. Maclean), but on a Bill introduced by the hon. member for West Elgin (Mr. Casey). Regarding that Bill, the Railway Committee had no less than three meetings, and that occurred only one year ago. The feeling of a large majority of the members of the committee, after full discussion had taken place, was in opposition to the Bill. The two principal reasons why I think it is not desirable to adopt this Bill are these: In the first place, the provision respecting automatic couplers is, as was shown to the committee, largely in the interest of gentlemen who have such devices to sell. The great railway corporations of Canada and the United States, between whom there is a constant interchange of traffic, and accordingly the adoption of a new system in one country ahead of its adoption in another country would cause serious inconvenience, have their own mechanical experts to examine improvements, and so soon as it is demonstrated that a certain device will save life or property, then the companies adopt it. They have men who understand these subjects thoroughly. It is in the interest of the companies themselves, and this is a stronger force than any proposed legislation, to adopt the latest kind of couplings or other inventions as soon as possible. The reason that can fairly be urged against the other provisions of the Bill is that this would be

an interference with the heads of all the departments of these railway companies, from the general manager down, and an attempt to deprive them of their own judgment of their skilled assistants. My experience is, and it is experience of every business man, that it is better to bring employer and employee together, and seek to induce the great railway corporations to adopt improvements, rather than to attempt to force their adoption by legislation passed from session to session. I shall not make any very lengthy remarks, because the matter has been extensively discussed in this House, and as has been remarked, we had it before us so long ago as 1891. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Davin) would seem, judging from his remarks, to say that when these Bills go before the Railway Committee they are throttled here. Well, I can say, Mr. Speaker, after nine years experience as an active member of the Railway Committee, that things that ought to pass there cannot be throttled. I reject the argument of the hon. gentleman, and if I were to express my own sentiments I would probably use a stronger word than characterize it as an argument. That Railway Committee is a credit to this House and to this country. Its capacity, its fairness, its fearlessness are such that any country in the world might be proud of it. I am speaking now as a member of the Opposition, and I shall preserve my high opinion of the Railway Committee until I get good reasons to change it. If the hon. the leader of the Government had not asked me to express my opinion here, I would have waited until the Bill got to the Railway Committee, when I would offer any remarks which I had to make on it. If the Bill goes to the Railway Committee, I believe it will get fair play there. I appeal to hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House who have been members of the Railway Committee—and I appeal to them more strongly because there are so many new members here—to endorse my opinion of that committee. I speak from my own knowledge as an active member of it, and I say that no tribunal in Great Britain or in the United States or in any free country is more independent, more fair, more honest and outspoken, and more just than is the Railway Committee of this House of Commons.

Mr. SPROULE. Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer a few remarks in regard to some of the arguments of my hon. friend (Mr. Tisdale). In the first place, I regard the principle of the Bill as correct. I cannot agree with the hon. member (Mr. Tisdale) that as soon as railway companies find these inventions valuable for saving life and property, they will adopt them without compulsion. The principle obtains all over the world of compelling people by legislation to protect life and property. In mills and factories it is provided that there must be fire escapes, and that there must be protection