

to express my regret that I was not more careful in sending it back to the printer myself.

## RAILWAY BILL.

### SECOND READING.

HON. MR. ABBOTT moved the second reading of Bill (Z) "An Act respecting Railways." He said: 'This is a Bill to make provision on two or three points which appear to require some legislation. They apply principally to incidental or minor powers of railways. The first has reference to a certain amount of embarrassment that has been experienced by railway companies connecting with the boundary line as to performing functions beyond the boundary, the ground taken being that they had no authority under their corporate powers—that their own constating Act did not give them any authority to deal with matters beyond the line. And it is to remedy that, and to give them power to do beyond the boundary whatever they can do in this country, in so far as the laws in force in the adjoining country permits them. In like manner, the next clause is to meet a difficulty which has been raised as to railway companies, which it is alleged are created only for the purpose of running railway carriages, selling and dealing with the lands which they acquire and hold in large quantities by subsidy and otherwise. A question has been raised as to whether they have that right, and it is to remove any doubt on that subject that the second sub-section is introduced. The second and third clauses have reference to a subject which has been made a matter of discussion extensively recently—that is, the difficulty that has been experienced from prairie fires, caused by sparks falling from locomotives, and a remedy has been suggested that there should be a fire guard created on each side of the railway by ploughing, and burning off the prairie grass which grows between the fire guard and the track itself. The next two clauses make it compulsory on the companies to do that in every case where it is found necessary. Then the fourth section makes a more perfect arrangement about the protection of cattle from injury on the track in partially fenced places than has heretofore existed. This clause, I believe, has been settled

after consultation by three or four gentlemen who represent outlying districts on the Ottawa river, where there has been a considerable amount of difficulty arising out of that kind of casualty. I submit it to the House as the best enactment that we can contrive for that purpose. These are the objects of the Bill.

HON. MR. WARK—I think, perhaps, there will be a good deal of danger in setting fire to the grass between the strips that are ploughed. If a wind should spring up it might blow the fire across the strip and carry it into the adjoining fields. There ought to be a safer way of removing this grass than burning it.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—This is a plan which has been suggested by experts in the North-West Territories. It is a familiar device of old times, when people were in danger themselves of being burnt by the spreading of fire, and it is said to be effectual for this purpose. The grass does not grow long; it is quite short, as a rule, and of course a railway company burning it off would take care to do so under such circumstances as to attain the object which is desired—that is to say, to prevent the spreading of any conflagration.

HON. MR. DICKEY—That is done by ploughing, so that there is nothing to burn.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—My hon. friend will see that they do not plough up the whole space; they plough up a strip 200 feet from the track, and the strip between that and the railway is what is burnt.

HON. MR. MACINNES (Burlington)—I am afraid it will be rather onerous upon the railways. This strip will not remain without grass, because we all know how very rapidly grass will grow, so that in the course of two years it will be as abundant as ever, and this ploughing will have to be a constant thing on the part of the railways.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read the second time.

## NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES BILL.

### POSTPONED.

The Order of the Day being called,—Committee of the Whole House on Bill