

kind, however powerful. In accordance with these views, I move, seconded by Mr. Hackett:

That this Bill be not read now the second time, but be read the second time this day six months.

Mr. WHITE (Renfrew). I am not prepared to say whether the Bill is a remedy for all the evils that now exist in relation to the management of railway companies; but I confess I am not a little surprised to hear an hon. gentleman of the large business experience of the hon. member for Prince Edward take the ground that there are no causes of objection to the way in which railways are managed in this country. My experience is that these railway companies are made the means of discriminating between individuals and localities, and some remedy is required in this respect. My own opinion is, this Bill does not go far enough; but I am quite satisfied that some remedy should be applied in the way of restricting railway companies from conducting their business in a manner that is beneficial to some and prejudicial to others. I am satisfied that the discussion which has arisen on this subject, whatever may be its fate, will be of much benefit in the way of directing attention to the question as it stands at present. It may be said that the common law of this country provides a remedy for discriminating rates by railway companies between individuals and localities. But we must remember that, up to the present time, at all events, the law has been inoperative in that respect. If the law can be put into operation by our courts and tribunals as they stand at present, and if it is a sufficient remedy some method should be devised of applying the law so as to make it reach the railway companies. Any person who knows anything about the power of railway corporations, must know that no individual desires to enter a suit against a great railway corporation for the purpose of obtaining justice with regard to the exactions made by such company. We all know that the power of these great companies is such that it is almost impossible for any individual to cope with them single-handed in the courts of this country. It seems to me that if some tribunal, some court of immediate resort was organized to which cases of discrimination on the part of railway companies might be referred without going through the process of law as it now stands, it would be very desirable to have such a court. It may be that a court of this kind might be unconstitutional, as the hon. member for Halton has suggested; but it seems to me that a body of men might be appointed to enquire summarily into cases referred to them, and if it was not deemed advisable to clothe them with the power of deciding the questions at issue, they might be charged with deciding whether the cases referred to them were such that they ought to be brought into the courts. For instance, if it be a fraud on the public that discriminating rates exist by which one individual may be able to obtain rates over a certain portion of the line on more favorable terms than those given to other individuals, as mentioned by the hon. member for Centre Huron, this tribunal proposed to be organized under this Bill might be charged with the duty of dealing with cases of that kind. I am strongly in favor of the adoption of some means by which those cases can be reached by some swift remedy, and for that reason I shall support the Bill and vote against the amendment.

Mr. ROSS (Middlesex). I am very glad, indeed, that the hon. member for North Simcoe has introduced this Bill. It is decidedly in the interest of the smaller towns of Ontario, and perhaps all over the Dominion. I am quite aware that railway companies have done a great deal to promote the trade of this country and develop its resources, but they have done all this on commercial principles, and as they are now managed, it is clear to everybody that, unless competition exists at certain points, the trade of smaller places may be sacrificed for the building up of larger places. Now, although a Bill like this may tend to increase rates at

competing points, the effect no doubt would be to reduce rates at other points, so that the railway corporations on the whole might not suffer much. Everybody can see how places like Toronto, London, &c., where there are competing lines of railways, people doing business at these points have material advantage over those doing business at smaller points. It is not the interest of the country to centralize wealth too largely at two or three particular places. Smaller towns all over the Dominion have burdened themselves for railway competition; and sometimes, when they got what they expected, they are deprived of this by combinations formed between rival companies. If there was a Court of Commissioners such as the hon. member for North Simcoe has referred to, we would get a better distribution of justice from railway corporations than is conferred by those preferential rates. I fancy that smaller towns and men of smaller means would have a better chance to maintain their position, and I feel satisfied that smaller towns, which are now being deprived of natural facilities for development, would grow more rapidly. I could state instances where smaller towns have been kept in the background by rates imposed against them. If the hon. member for North Simcoe could break down these differential rates and give advantages to people who are deprived of these advantages in their ordinary business, it would be a great boon to this country. I hope the House, therefore, will reject the amendment and adopt the motion, so that we may be enabled to follow in the course in which the more advanced States of the American Union have gone, as well as England, and thus relieve ourselves to a certain extent of the bondage imposed on us by the railway corporations.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I hope my hon. friend will not persist in his motion to delay the Bill for three months. This Bill is now before the House. It has been amended by my hon. friend since last year, and now he brings it in in a shape which he thinks entitles it to receive the sanction of Parliament. It is only fair we should refer the Bill to a Committee. I should prefer the Railway Committee, because it is much larger, but if the House is of opinion that a separate Committee would give better attention to the matter, I would not oppose the selection of a Committee. I think the Committee will have a very important duty to perform, which will be to examine the matter thoroughly, to hear witnesses, and obtain all the data required to enable them to report a good Bill. When the Bill comes before the House it will be reprinted and we shall be in a position to judge whether the Bill so reported is one that should receive the sanction of the House; but up to this moment we can hardly say we should not consider this matter at all. There may be exaggerations on one side or the other, but all this will be examined by the Committee, and it would report how the matter stood. I really believe the hon. member for Prince Edward (Mr. McCuaig), would do well to reserve this motion for another stage of the Bill, should the Bill, after it had been considered by the Committee, meet with his disapproval.

Mr. McCUAIG. My experience is, that most of the railways through Ontario have not been constructed in the interests of the people, but to oblige political partisans in the Ontario House. I believe there has been no regular system laid down on which those railways were to be built, and no doubt railways have been built which have brought ruin on those building them, owing to the action of political parties. We cannot expect that every man should have a railway at his own door, and it is time that the House took into its own keeping the large sum of money granted in aid of railways. My resolution was not submitted with a view to its being offensive to the hon. gentleman who introduced the Bill, of whose ability I am perfectly sensible; but from the temper of the House and of