

Hon. Mr. DAVID—Hear, hear; that is the point.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—The Railway Committee was unanimously in favour of giving these powers to the Board of Railway Commissioners, provided they were exercised before the House was sitting. I confess that personally I stood by my first intimation of voting for the Bill, even if the cart was ahead of the horse, as it appeared to be to the majority of the members of the Senate and of that committee. I did so because I felt, although we were granting powers to an irresponsible body to sit in judgment over our own action, that if an injustice should be done by that Board of Railway Commissioners, Parliament could always remedy the injustice by legislation at the following session, and that we could, notwithstanding our mandate, grant the powers that were sought for the location of the railway that had been denied by that irresponsible body. We adjourned those two Private Bills, and this amendment to the Railway Act in the Railway Committee two or three times over the last two or three years, and we remarked, with the public representatives of the press present, that we were faced with difficulties, but that we wanted, before passing those Private Bills, to be satisfied that the province of Ontario, or the Hydro-Electric Commission, would have an opportunity to be heard before us, because we never saw them, we never had them before us, and yet we adjourned from week to week with the express desire of giving full satisfaction to claims of Ontario in this matter. Personally, I said that I would go any length with the senatorial delegation from Ontario, to maintain the autonomy of Ontario, and give full swing to the experiments that were being tried by the Hydro-Electric Commission. I was not present at the last sitting of the Railway Committee, but I find those two private Bills have passed without any amendment, because there was a proposition that the amendment to the Railway Act should be tacked on to those railway Bills in order to avoid making general legislation to cover special cases. To this moment we have not heard from the Railway Committee, whose chairman is my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie, as to the disposal of these amendments to the Railway Act, I should like to hear from him and to know why there has been no report.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—There is no report because it was moved in the committee that

the Bill should not be reported. We deferred consideration practically over the session. The Hydro-Electric of Ontario I think had ample notice of our meeting. I think they were notified specially when our meeting would take place, and they never showed us the courtesy of being present. Mr. Beck made a strong fight in the House of Commons, and after that went back to Toronto and never came back. The particular objection was to clause 3 of the Bill, where they put in the hands of the commission the power practically to veto legislation of Parliament. The clause reads as follows:

3. The Board may approve such map and location, or any portion thereof, or may make or require such changes and alterations therein as it deems expedient; but if the Board deems that the construction of a railway upon the proposed location or upon any portion thereof is not in the public interest it shall refuse approval of the whole or of such portion; and in any case where the Board deems.

I think the committee took this view, that the Parliament of Canada should decide what was in the public interest. So far as the location was concerned, we had no objection to the board approving of the plan. In fact, they have that right now, but the Minister of Railways approved of the plan first. The committee viewed the Bill in that way. For instance, if we passed a Bill for a railway from Ottawa to Montreal, the board could not only say the railroad should not be located in a certain place, but that it should not be built at all. That is the reason it was not reported. I venture to say there has been no Bill before the committee since I have been a member of it that received more careful consideration than this one. I think the Citizen must be misinformed in some way, because I cannot conceive of the Citizen making that attack on the Senate in the language they have used if they had known the facts.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—Could we have the assurance of the leader of the Government that in the early days of next session he will bring amendments to restore the clauses of the Railway Act of 1883, which was injudiciously amended, I might say, in 1906?

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—It may not be improper for me to say, as representing the Government before the Railway Committee in connection with this proposed amendment to the Railway Act, that I have to pay this tribute to members, not only in