

would not be able to keep up their rolling stock. The receipts which those railways are able to make by going out of the country and receiving through traffic which otherwise would not go over their lines, would be altogether lost to them. It is well known that within the last two or three years the Grand Trunk Railway has laid a new track, it has secured an excellent combination for passenger traffic, and has put on Pullman carriages which greatly promote the comfort of the travelling public. The whole community are to be considered, and not the interests of any special class. Railways are institutions for the benefit of the public, and everything should be done which, within reasonable limits, will give them the means of keeping up their business, and of securing to the public the best accommodation for passengers and freight. The lives of passengers, and the speedy transit of passengers, are of quite as much importance as the carriage of freight. I regret exceedingly that there has been nothing suggested in the speech of my hon. friend in introducing his Bill, which has changed my mind in any way upon the impracticability of reaching even the desirable parts of the policy which he desires to enforce by means of this Bill. So far as I can see, it has not been shown that this Bill will meet any of the great and grave objections which have been urged against the abuses of the railway system. The system here is in its infancy, and we are endeavoring, as far as we can, to encourage capital to come here. I am not afraid that any very large profits will be made by these companies; I am not afraid that the bloated capitalist will be puffed out larger because he holds shares of railway stock that do not pay dividends; and, while companies are in that position, we are bound to deal with them with all possible fairness, and give them, so far as we can, at least our forbearance. There have been no successful railway Commissions created in the United States. Considering that the railways exist by separate State charters, it is impossible for any comprehensive Commission to be created by the United States Government without interfering with State rights, and no such Commission has been attempted. There are, of course, general railway Statutes in the United States, but a year or two ago a Commission was appointed to investigate the working of railways in the State of New York. It is pretty well known why that Commission was created and what its objects were, and I am apprehensive that it would be a dangerous power to put in the hands of any two or three men to regulate the traffic of this Dominion. I fear it would be scarcely possible to find men who would not represent too strongly either one or the other of the two sides, which might be antagonistic to each other, and when a competition of interests occurred it is easy to see which would be likely to get the advantage. On the whole, I do not think the time has come—I do not think our experience has been great enough in such matters to deal intelligently and fairly with the questions which come up in this Bill. For myself, I confess I do not think there is any pressing necessity for such a measure, and while I regret to differ from my esteemed and hon. friend, who has introduced the Bill, I have done so frankly and fairly, and shall continue to do so until I see a better reason for sustaining his measure than is apparent at present.

Mr. WALLACE (Norfolk). I am not prepared to say that the measure before the House is the best that could be adopted for the regulation of railways; but I am clear that, after Government ownership of railways has been done away with, we must have Government supervision of some kind over these roads. I cannot agree with the proposition of the Minister of Railways, who says that Canada has been much indebted to railway companies. I know that Canada has been deeply indebted to railways, but that she has been indebted to railway companies, I very much doubt. Take for instance the Grand Trunk. The people of this country, some twenty-five years ago, gave \$15,000,000 to aid

in the construction of that road, and yet I believe it is a fact that that railway is carrying the produce of the farmers in the neighborhood of Chicago more cheaply to the seaboard than the produce of the Canadian farmers. The hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat (Mr. Plumb), says that the railway companies are bound by the law; but I would like to know what individual can go into court and fight with a railway, for the company can carry the case from court to court until, if their opponent is a man of fortune, his fortune would be exhausted. He says that interest has not been paid on the capital which has been invested in railways. I admit it, and this is one of the reasons why I think railways should be the property of the Canadian people and not of English stockholders. It is not to the people of Canada that our progress in connection with railways is due, but to the widows and orphans and the capitalists of England, and I think that if there is a benefit from railway investments Canadians should receive it, and if there is a loss they should sustain it. The hon. the Minister of Railways said that he was doubtful if a lawyer could be got for less than \$15,000 or \$20,000, in whom the people of this country would have confidence as a Railway Commissioner. I mention the name of the Hon. Mr. Justice Cameron, who sits on the Bench, and does not get anything like \$20,000, and there is no man in this country but would have the most implicit confidence in any judgment which he might render. Some hon. members have spoken of competition, but competition cannot be obtained, for the simple reason that the railway companies pool their earnings and sell out to each other. We have had illustrations of that fact—perhaps not very numerous—but we have had some. The people living along the line of the Credit Valley Railway, aided it for the purpose of getting competition with the Great Western and Grand Trunk, and they taxed themselves heavily for its construction. The Credit Valley was built, and now we find that that road is said to have been leased to the Great Western, one of the roads against which, to secure competition, the people subscribed their money and built the railway. Then again, we have the positive injustice with which these roads deal with the people. I do not blame the railway companies—I blame this Parliament and this Government for giving them power to do injustice. I hold that it would be the best thing that could be done in the interests of the country, if the people would authorize Parliament or the Government to buy up the whole of the railways and run them in the interests of the people, instead of their being run as they are now in the interests of the shareholders. I do not blame the shareholders, because if I was one I would very likely do as they do. Every man looks to his own interests, and when the interests of a body of men are against the interests of a community, the interests of the community are likely to go to the wall. At present railroads have the power—and they exercise it—of giving discriminating rates of freight, and this discrimination results in the injury and ruin of some men and some places. For instance, suppose I am doing business in a town, and another man beside me gets preferential rates, what is the effect but to destroy my business? In places which are competing points special rates are given against those where there is no competition, and the result is an injustice to the property of those in the non-competing points. I am pleased that my hon. friend has brought in this measure, and, although it may not be adopted in its entirety—although some other measure may be substituted for it—I trust the House will see that a measure will be passed putting railways in the country under the control of the Government, and under strict governmental supervision. I think that this country was not made for the railways, or the people of this country made for the railways, but that the railways were made for the convenience and accommodation of the people and for the benefit of Canada. I doubt