

and I regret to say that the contention of these gentlemen did not prevail. Of late years we have in two different ways invaded provincial rights; one by taking over the charter rights conferred by the provinces and declaring them to be for the general advantage of Canada, and the other, by this parliament giving Acts of incorporation to roads that under the provisions of the British North America Act should be under the jurisdiction of the provinces. It is because of the growing tendency in this direction that there is a strong demand for the protection of provincial rights. The Minister of Railways said that if every one was like me it would be an unhappy day for the corporations. I did not propose to take away vested rights that were properly obtained, but I did say that I would have no hesitation in taking rights away from a corporation that were improperly obtained, and I repeat that statement on my full responsibility as a member of parliament. Suppose a man steals your horse and sells it to an innocent party, you have the right to take that horse back when you find it in the possession of the third party, and if these corporations become improperly possessed of public property, the public should have a right to claim them back. I have no respect for vested rights improperly acquired, and I am prepared at any time to restore these rights to their proper owners. I commend to the judgment of this House the amendment proposed by the member for Toronto, because it confirms to corporations the rights they have properly and legally secured.

Mr. WADE. The hon. gentleman is an old member of this House, and I am but a new member. Might I ask him if he was in the House supporting the government that proposed to wrest from the provinces the inland fisheries and the inland reserves?

Mr. SPROULE. That is foreign to the question we are discussing. It was declared by many legal authorities that we could not by the mere statement that a work was for the general advantage of Canada, take away provincial rights, and many of us allowed that question to be fought out in the courts. But there has since been a decision of the courts that we can take away these rights by such a declaration, and in view of that, we think it is time to stop it. I am consistent in my whole parliamentary career for I have always fought on the same lines as I am fighting to-night.

Mr. COWAN. It must be amusing to the members of this House to hear the member for East Grey, that encyclopedia of all parliamentary knowledge in his own judgment, saying for the first time in twenty-one years that he was now in favour of defending provincial rights. For the last twenty-one long years he has been wandering in the wilderness, and the greater part of that time

supporting a government that constantly invaded provincial rights.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Come back doctor.

Mr. COWAN. I am not surprised that the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) should leave the Chamber. I rose to ask him whether he referred to street railways being incorporated by this parliament? When he was speaking I asked him for the name of an electric railway that had been incorporated in the province of Ontario by this parliament, and the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule), shielding himself behind his rights, refused to answer, and stated that I was making an absurd interruption.

An hon. MEMBER. And then he runs away.

Mr. COWAN. I rose in my place now for the purpose of addressing a few remarks to the member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) and the brave and gallant gentleman left the Chamber. For twenty-one years he was the enemy of provincial rights in this House, when men on this side who have grown grey in the service of their country were fighting the battles of provincial rights. For twenty-one years the hon. gentleman from East Grey was silent and dumb as an oyster in his shell, and voted every time against provincial rights in this House, but now at last he has suddenly found the light and he has become a champion of the provinces. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule) saw fit to draw a comparison about a man stealing a horse, and I can only say that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sproule) reminded me of a story which comes from the far off state of Kansas.

A new member of the legislature of that state after listening to a long speech void of either interest or merit arose, and in a nasal twang replied as follows:—Mr. Speaker, I have listened for the last hour or hour and a half to the hon. gentleman, not that what he said was worth listening to or the manner in which he said it particularly interesting, but because I could not prevent my auricular organs from performing their natural functions within a reasonable distance of a noise of that description, and the longer I listened the more I was irresistibly driven to the conclusion that the honourable gentleman had started his mouth agoing and had then gone away and left it.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Hon. Mr. TISDALE. It seems to me that there are one or two important misapprehensions with regard to this clause. As I understand the question which has been raised just now, it is a very important one. There is no gentleman on this side of the House contending that a railway as distinguished from a street railway shall not be under the control of the board. I was call-