

We, it is true, have power to declare that a work is for the general benefit of Canada, and declaring that we assume it to be ours; but we are bound to exercise that power *bona fide*. We are bound not to arbitrarily declare railways for the general advantage of Canada within the sense of this clause if they are not such works. Now, there is a sense in which any railway you please to construct is a work for the general advantage of Canada, or of two or more of the Provinces; in the sense that it enriches some part of the country—and inasmuch as we are all interested in the property of each, therefore it is for the general advantage. But that is a sense in which the building of a dwelling house, or a highway, or anything in which the industry, the enterprise and the energy of the people may be usefully employed, may be said to be for the general advantage. But that is not the sense in which this phrase is used in the Constitutional Act. It is not because it is a good and useful work—because it enriches the country, because it is essential to the existence of a railway, that it should connect with some other railway, that it is of necessity for the general advantage of Canada. The line may be difficult to draw; it may be shadowy; it may be extremely hard to say at what point we should pause and say that the railway was such that we could not honestly declare it to be for the general advantage of Canada, or of two or more of the Provinces, but there is such a point. Each railway should be taken up by itself—and the general proposition that the simple circumstance that it touches or intersects two of the leading lines of railways, and therefore, it is within the meaning of this clause, should be repudiated by this House, because if you say yes to that proposition, you practically say that the operation of the Provincial jurisdiction over Provincial railways shall be known no more. You cannot point out a railway that is not going to connect with one of these leading lines, and you take away the local stimulus, which local control, local energy, local enterprise, local subsidies, have so greatly evoked in the past. Much has been done by the Provinces, and especially by the Province of Ontario, in the way of aiding local railways, and I say it is a wrong thing to take away the jurisdiction over these properties upon—I cannot call it the principle, but I can find no better word, that the hon. gentleman proposes to apply.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The hon. gentleman states that he does not intend at this stage of the discussion to raise any objection to the second reading of this Bill, as a large part of it, I believe, commends itself to his judgment. But he takes exception to that part especially which brings under the jurisdiction of this Parliament a large part of the railways of this country. I listened to the hon. gentleman carefully, as I always do, to learn from him what possible objection could exist to this Parliament having jurisdiction in reference to any railway. The hon. gentleman says it will dampen the ardor of Local Legislatures in reference to granting charters to railway companies who apply for them. Why should it dampen their ardor? What is there in the fact of this Parliament having jurisdiction in reference to a railway to interfere in the slightest degree with the desire on the part of a Provincial Legislature to aid and assist in the construction of such a railway? I can see a great many reasons why it is in the interest of the country that the railway system should, to a large extent, be under the control of this Parliament. The hon. gentleman knows that the attention of this Parliament has been forced to the consideration of the question by applications being made to the Government and the House to remedy known and crying evils in relation to local railways over which we have no control. He knows that that demand has come from the country—from the people; that application has been made to take cognizance over matters over which we have no jurisdiction; and, Sir, if a line of railway is chartered by

Mr. BLAKE.

this Parliament, can any person tell me any reason why all the lines connecting with that line should not be under the jurisdiction of this Parliament, so that we should have power to carry out arrangements in connection with the leading line of railway, with its branches and connections, the same as we have with the railway itself? The object of this Parliament is not to exercise control over the railways for the sake either of the Government or the Parliament; nor is it the object of the Local Legislatures or the Local Governments to retain control of those railways for any Provincial purpose. The object that is sought is the public good. Charters granted by the Local Legislatures, or by this Parliament, are not to benefit the individuals who promote these charters, but the public. We both have a common aim, a common object; we both are free from any influence that would induce us to exercise that control apart from the advantage it has for the general public. Now, with regard to railway crossings. The hon. gentleman knows that railway companies have now to come to the Privy Council to obtain authority to cross one line of railway by another; and if it is found necessary, for the protection of life and property, to throw such a safeguard around the public with regard to the interference of one line of railway with another, I cannot possibly see what injury can result to the country, or any section of it, or any railway corporation, by having the same power retained by this Parliament. The hon. gentleman knows that this Parliament has never erred in the direction of restricting the efforts of parties who desired and were able to construct railways, but has always been ready to afford them every possible facility. The hon. gentleman knows that whoever approaches this Parliament with a sound practicable and desirable railway project, readily obtains the assistance of all parties in Parliament to carry out the project for the good of the country. I have listened attentively to the hon. gentleman's remarks, and I have failed to hear him make one single point. The hon. gentleman says that this measure abolishes local control. It does not abolish local interests in this matter. The hon. gentleman is perfectly aware that companies who have received charters from the Local Legislatures constantly come to this Parliament and ask to be declared railways for the general advantage of Canada; and I have no hesitation in saying that it would be extremely difficult, in my judgment, to point out any railway in Canada of which this Parliament may not fairly say that it is for the general benefit and the general interests of Canada. There is no railway in the country, there is not a mile of railway in operation in this country, to-day, that is not doing something towards, and contributing to, the general prosperity of the country; and if it is contributing to the general prosperity of the country, I say it is contributing to the general advantage of Canada. And I say with the experience that both sides of this House have had of our entire readiness to take up and deal with all these questions on their merits, and to give all the aid and assistance we can to these various railway projects, there is no reason why the slightest injury can possibly flow from the proposal now made to bring the leading lines of railway and the railways that are subsidiary to them—the branches of those lines of railway and the lines of railway that cross them—under the control of this Parliament, and thus to a certain extent declare that the same power that has jurisdiction over the main trunk line should have jurisdiction over the branches and over the lines that intersect and cross them. The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that many of the railways we have been dealing with to-day have charters from this Legislature, that many of them are subsidized by the various Provinces, as well as by the municipalities in the various sections of country through which they run. This is one of the subjects, I think, in which all parties in this country are interested. This railway question is one in which the Local