

consideration should be given to anything except this one question, and that no further light should be thrown on the subject from any quarter. But when he was met by the statement, on the part of the Toronto Board of Trade and the body of Canadian capitalists who were anxious to have this important work kept in Canadian hands, that they were willing not only to amalgamate with this company, but to give them a majority of one, that one being the hon. member for Kent himself, that proposal was rejected. They also stated to the committee, as meeting one of the points raised by the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals, that they were prepared to have a clause inserted in their Bill under which the company would agree to hand over the enterprise to the government of Canada at any time, upon receiving a return of the money which they had actually expended upon the work. My hon. friend, the member for Kent, who has been promoting this Bill with such energy and success—for I have never seen a Bill engineered through committee with more energy and success than this one—met the occasion promptly. He got up and said that if the charter were given his company, he would be perfectly willing to accept a clause of that kind, and it was upon that pledge the majority voted down the proposal to refer the Bill to the committee. Subsequently they withdrew their support, because they said that they had given their vote in consequence of the pledge given by the hon. gentleman to accept that clause. The next step was the proposal, when the Bill had passed through the committee, that the Minister of Railways and Canals should be requested to draw up a clause that would carry out what had been the agreement on all sides. When the committee next met, the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals proposed a clause, not, I frankly admit, as embodying his own views, but to carry out the object which the promoters of both Bills had expressed themselves willing to accept. But the promoter of the Bill, the hon. member for Kent, then refused to accept the clause submitted by the Minister of Railways and Canals, and moved himself a clause in different words, but containing the same essential principles, namely, that the government should be in the position to assume this work and take it over on paying the value of the work to the company. No decision was reached, and when the committee next met it curiously occurred that the Minister of Railways and Canals was absent—no doubt called away by very important business. But in his place were the hon. the Ministers of Finance (Mr. Fielding) and Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Davies), who had hitherto taken no part in the discussion and given no attention to the committee. There is an old saying that it is better to trust the devil you know than the devil you do not

Sir CHARLES TUPPER.

know, and without insinuating anything of the kind with regard to any of those gentlemen, we had lost the one we did know, and in whose attitude we had previously concurred and found his place taken, not by one, but by two we did not know. Under these circumstances, my hon. friend was able, with that engineering talent which he possesses, and which almost lead one to suppose that he has missed his proper vocation, to get the committee to overrule the very pledge he himself had made. No doubt he had wisely strengthened his hands by suddenly promoting to the important position of director two hon. gentlemen who are very influential members both of the committee and this House. But, at all events, by whatever means it was brought about, we found ourselves in a minority, and the very clause which my hon. friend had himself moved, was rejected. That is the position, and under the circumstances it becomes very well worthy, even at this late stage of debate, to consider whether a measure of such admitted importance should not contain a clause that would enable the government, without any undue expenditure, such as they are generally obliged to make when they expropriate a public work, to take over this enterprise. Supposing this American influence which stands behind this Bill—and it was upon the capital furnished by these gentlemen mainly the committee were asked to rely—supposing at any time the interests of the United States and of the gentlemen connected with this enterprise became antagonistic to Canadian interests, it becomes a grave question, whether we should not protect ourselves by inserting such a clause in the measure as the one proposed, and to which my hon. friend had given his consent. I am happy to see American capital and enterprise coming into Canada at any time, but I infinitely prefer giving scope to our own capital; and when you have a Bill now before the committee, sustained by the Toronto Board of Trade and bearing the names of fourteen gentlemen of the highest standing and character as capitalists and men of business and Canadians of both parties in this country, it becomes a very grave question whether we should not keep the promoter to his pledge, and embody either the clause proposed or some modification of it in the Bill, so that in case at any time the Canadian government should feel it was in the interests of the country that this important enterprise should come under their control, they should be put in the position of being able to take control of it.

Mr. T. O. DAVIS (Saskatchewan). I think the hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Tupper), has used rather strong language with reference to my hon. friend from Kent (Mr. Campbell). He has practically said my hon. friend had bought up the committee—that he appointed some parties directors in this company, and