

the freights charged. In other cases parties on long routes get exceptional freights. Why has one person a right to get exceptional advantageous rates over his neighbor? The Commissioners should enquire into matters of that kind and prevent such evils as exceptional freights. No man has a right to get his stuff carried to market more cheaply than his neighbor's. No man should be handicapped in the operations of business. A railway company should charge equal rates to all parties. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill as an instalment of the legislation that should be on our Statute books.

Mr. PLUMB. The question which has been suggested by the Bill has agitated the public mind for a great many years, in fact ever since railways were constructed. My hon. friend who brought in the Bill (Mr. McCarthy) stated in his argument in favor of its passage, that in England the question, very soon after railways were chartered, arose in Parliament. A Committee was appointed in 1840, and another in 1841, and another in 1865, and the results of those Committees were not found satisfactory, even as late as 1872; that twenty-two years results of the examinations of those Committees and of their reports were not found satisfactory, and that in a country where the railway system is entirely isolated, and where difficulties such as disturb the railway business of this country do not exist, and where the roads yield a fairer return. Under all these circumstances the hon. gentleman says that, in 1872, it was reported the Railway Commission was not a success.

Mr. McCARTHY. I did not say the Railway Commission was not a success, but that the reports of the different Committees had not suggested an improvement up to this time. It was only in 1872 the Railway Commission was appointed.

Mr. PLUMB. That was what I was trying to say, but my remarks were not so clear, perhaps, as my hon. friend's. I meant to say that after eighteen years' experiments this Railway Commission had been successful, and that railway matters were now comparatively within its control, resembling the conclusion which the hon. gentleman proposes to reach by his Bill, presented to this House for almost the first time. He then stated that there had been Commissions appointed in the United States. The only one working in the United States is, as he stated himself, in Massachusetts—an Advisory Commission which has not power to do anything—no power to decide, no power to take the law into its hands, but merely to make recommendations, and those recommendations to be accepted by the Legislature or not, as the Legislature chooses. It must be remembered that, in the United States, the whole railway system is a continuous one, that there can be no such thing as legislating for separate railway systems. The great question of railway traffic from the west to the sea-board is not one, I venture to say, which can be dealt with by a measure such as the hon. gentleman proposes, and the railway companies, in order to retain their traffic, it is well known, with the constant competition, the constant change, the constant fluctuation, if they were hampered by being compelled to refer to a Commission for powers to alter or to change their rates, would be handicapped in such a way that the traffic which passes through Canada would be driven out of it altogether; for the railway managers of other countries would very soon find out that it was impossible for our railways to compete with them if there was any such disturbing causes the hon. gentleman proposes. The question as to whether there should be a discrimination in rates, is one that has been discussed on more than one occasion in this House and elsewhere. That it is an evil, that it often inflicts injustice, cannot be denied. The only question is how it can be practically dealt with; and, in view of the railway legislation, I wish it to be put on record on every occasion in which I have an opportunity of

Mr. HAGGART.

publicly announcing my views on the subject, as of the opinion that it becomes us always to deal with these great corporations, in view of the great benefits that have resulted to this country—greater benefits in the aggregate than any of those minor matters to which the hon. gentleman has referred—and that those who have opened up the country by means of their enterprise and capital have, almost in every case, failed to reap any return for the moneys invested. It is a well known fact that there is no railway in Canada, at this moment, that pays any dividend whatever, except the very small dividend that may have been declared by the Great Western, which, I believe, has been at the rate of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum. The shareholders of that company, mostly English capitalists, have put their money into it, and I believe it will be a serious injury to this country if it is found that we are tampering with the business by means of such a Commission as has been proposed by my hon. friend—that we are tampering with the railway business, which so far, in many instances, has scarcely paid more than its running expenses. It is perfectly well known that in the Grand Trunk Railway millions of capital have been lost. No matter what the original management might be, no matter whether there were mistakes made in its construction, it has wrought for the people of Canada a benefit which has been perfectly immeasurable, and, for one, I am always ready to consider this benefit in any legislation proposed to this House that is of a hostile nature to that company. I have no railway interests whatever; I stand in this House entirely free; and I believe we shall be true to our interests when we admit that invested capital here has its rights, and that it behooves us not to imperil those rights, or interfere by legislation with them in such a way as seriously to hamper or injure them. My hon. friend proposes that the complicated questions which concern particularly railway companies themselves, and the large competition which has already been created by legislation—I think most unfairly to the railway companies that have already invested their money here—my hon. friend suggests that those rights, and the absolute control and management of those companies shall by this means be taken out of their hands and be virtually vested—how? Vested in a Commission of gentlemen who may or may not be practical men. They are very likely not to be, because such men would demand salaries which would preclude the Government of Canada from being able to employ them. The manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway, I believe, has a salary of \$50,000 a year. This Commission would require a man of great skill and of ability to take these vast and complicated interests into his hands and so regulate them as to do perfect justice to all parties. It is not for the purpose of favoring any class that a Bill of this kind should be drawn; it is for the purpose of protecting railway interests just as much as protecting the interests of the people; and I think it requires skill, ability, judgment, experience and impartiality, such as in the very outset it would be almost impossible to obtain. The hon. gentleman says railways are not amenable to the law. I do not know why. It appears to be certain, however, that those existing by virtue of Provincial charters can hardly be reached by any legislation such as this, unless we provoke further that conflict of jurisdiction that we desire to avoid. The hon. gentleman says it is possible for combinations of railways to defeat the policy which has been inaugurated by the present Government. Well, I am not aware of any case where any such injury has been inflicted. There may be, there always will be in the management of railways, special cases where discriminations will be made. It is absolutely necessary in some cases, in order to retain the through traffic, that special rates should be made. Without such an arrangement even the Grand Trunk Railway, and the railways competing with it for through traffic, would be third-class railways; they