

matter, and the people of Winnipeg would consider an eleventh-hour repentance very much better than none at all, and if the Government are prepared to appreciate the position in which we are placed there with respect to this improvement, and are prepared to set aside a reasonable amount of money for that purpose, they will certainly obtain from those residents a very large amount of gratitude. During this session, a private company has applied to this Parliament for incorporation as "The Lake Winnipeg and Hudson Bay Canal Company," and, incidentally, that company has asked for a franchise to improve those rapids. I have, on behalf of the city of Winnipeg, opposed, and I intend to oppose the proposition that that company should receive a franchise from this Parliament in connection with those rapids, because, while it is true that if a canal were constructed from Lake Winnipeg to Hudson Bay, it would be necessary, in the interest of the canal company, to improve those locks, still, the city of Winnipeg and the surrounding country desire to have the locks constructed, and rapids improved whether the canal from Lake Winnipeg to Hudson Bay is ever constructed or not. We think it would be most unfortunate to hand over a franchise for the purpose of taking control of this public work, to a private company, in any event, but we certainly feel satisfied that if the Government could be induced to hand over a franchise covering a great river like the Red River, to a private company, it should be only on two conditions: 1. That the company had money in hand and were ready to proceed with the work; 2. That the tolls to be exacted for the use of those improvements should not, in any case, exceed what the parties using the navigation could fairly be expected to pay, utterly regardless of the question as to what the work cost. So it will be seen that the conditions which Winnipeg exacts make it almost equivalent to saying, as they do say, that no private company should have such a franchise handed over to them. I understand that the Government intend to restrict the powers of this company by some provision by which the Government are to be entitled to go on with the work if they see fit, but if they do not see fit, then it was to be handed over to this company. That stand is entirely unsatisfactory to the people of Winnipeg in one aspect. So far as the Government indicate that they have some idea of taking hold of the work, the people of Winnipeg are most glad to notice the fact, and would congratulate the Government if it were carried out; but the other alternative, handing this undertaking over to the company in case the Government do not intend to go on with the work, does not meet with the approval of the citizens there, and the restrictions which the Government propose to place on the company are not, in our opinion, sufficient. They say: We will reserve the power to approve

the plans and allow the company to go on with the work unless we think their plans are proper. I put this case: Suppose a private company did go on with this work?

Mr. OUMET. Mr. Speaker, is the hon. gentlemen in order in discussing a Bill which is now before the Railway Committee, stating what the conditions are, and so on?

Mr. SPEAKER. If that is what the hon. gentleman is doing, he is certainly out of order—if he is discussing a Bill which is before a committee of the House.

Mr. MARTIN. I think I am not out of order in saying that application has been made by this company to Parliament. I am not proposing to discuss their Bill, but the action of the Government.

Mr. OUMET. The Bill is to be discussed to-morrow, and perhaps the hon. gentleman might postpone his remarks until then.

Mr. MARTIN. I do not know what will be discussed at the meeting to-morrow. I do not discuss the matter except as it bears on the question as regards whether the Government should take up this work or not. It will not be satisfactory to propose, as I understand they intend to propose to this House, to hand over this work to a private company unless the conditions attached to the performance of the work by the private company were of such a nature as would benefit the people of Winnipeg and the surrounding country from the work being done by the Government of the day. I am very much delighted to find that this question is approached by the Government to-day in a very different aspect from what it was in 1894, when I first brought this question before the House. Then, all the Government could say was, that their engineers had looked into the matter, and that according to the reports of the engineers, the expense of the work was so great, that they were not in a position to recommend Parliament to vote any money for that purpose. I am glad to know that two years having elapsed since that announcement, and the elections being near at hand, the Government are inclined to look upon this question in a somewhat different light. I frankly say to them, that their course in that respect is a very proper one in their own interest, and also in the public interest. I have no doubt, that if the Government, even at the eleventh hour realize their duty in this matter, and recollect the many promises that they and their friends have made to the people up there, and do their duty in the premises by devoting public money to this work, they will certainly very much improve their political position in the city of Winnipeg. I wish to say at the same time, Mr. Speaker, that public money spent on this work, to be of any benefit to Winnipeg and to the province of Manitoba, must be voted in such a way as to really give the people