

Bill (No. 24) An Act respecting the Edmonton and Slave Lake Railway Company.

Bill (No. 26) An Act respecting the Kootenay Central Railway Company.—(Hon. Mr. Perley).

RAILWAY STATISTICS.

MOTION.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON moved:

That an humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor General; praying that His Excellency may be pleased to lay before the Senate copies of all requests to the Board of Railway Commissioners by the Minister of Railways, under Section 28 of the Railway Act, and also copies of all Orders in Council made within the last twelve months respecting level crossings by railways over public highways, the dates of making such requests or Orders in Council to be given.

He said: I wish to call the attention of the right hon. gentleman who leads this House to the fact that the Senate has not yet been put in possession of either the Railway Statistical Report or the report of the Railway Commissioners. In one case, that is with reference to the statistics, the law provides that they shall be laid before both Houses of parliament within twenty-one days after the opening of the session, and, in the other case, that the report shall be submitted within fifteen days after the opening of parliament. On the 28th of January I made an inquiry as to when we might expect to get the report of the Board of Railway Commissioners, and the right hon. gentleman was good enough to say that he would look into the matter. The day following, the report, in manuscript, was submitted to the House of Commons, but it has not yet been submitted to the Senate. In this matter two things appear; first, a great laxity on the part of these boards in the performance of their duty under the law, and, second, a slight thrown, whether wantonly or not, at this House in not treating it in the same manner as the House of Commons has been treated with reference to the report of the Board of Railway Commissioners. While this slight has been cast on the Senate and while this laxity in the performance of duty is evident, the Board of Railway Commissioners have apparently been supplying information to the press, perhaps through the minister, and furnishing very important statements and statis-

The SPEAKER.

tics to the public. It seems to me this information should come in the legal and proper manner through the representatives of the people in both Houses of parliament, according to the law, instead of being dealt out, ex-parte as it were, to the press as in the present instance.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—I shall call attention to the matter forthwith. I think the report has not been printed.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I am speaking of two reports, the report of the Railway Commissioners, which was submitted in manuscript to the House of Commons on the 29th of January, but has not yet been submitted to the Senate in any form, while the law requires that it shall be presented to both Houses within fifteen days after the opening of parliament.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—We adjourned, I think, on the 29th.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—And there is the volume of railway statistics which, under the Act, should be laid before both Houses of parliament within twenty-one days after the opening of the session, but which has not been presented to this House and had not up to to-day been presented to the House of Commons.

Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—That, of course, would be from the Department of Railways.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I have no desire to interfere—

The SPEAKER—I do not know whether the hon. gentleman has considered that perhaps this motion is unnecessary and possibly out of order. An address to His Excellency is not required now that the Railway Commission are under the direct control of parliament. Formerly, when it was the Railway Committee of the Privy Council I suppose an address would be required, but the Railway Board are now the ministers of parliament under the Act of Parliament, and a simple order of the House is all that would be required without having an address to His Excellency. I suppose it can be done either way.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—I think my hon. friend the Speaker, if he looks into the mat-