

selves. If the line is well sustained the board will not interfere.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I am not disposed to agree with my honourable friend from De Salaberry (Hon. Mr. Béique) in regard to this amendment, because subsections g and l of the Railway Act give such wide powers to the board that they impliedly cover the extension sought by clause h of the old Bill and the amendment which is now under review. I see no reason why the board should not have the right to review the way in which the road is maintained; therefore I have no objection to extending to the board the simple discretion which is allowed it under this clause.

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK: I have not had time to look at other amendments which may have been made to chapter 37, but on the whole I think this paragraph should be in the Act. Of course, it is liable to very serious abuse in case the employees of a company were constantly appealing to the board to get them to do things that the company should be left to deal with. At the same time, I think the board should have the power, if the question should arise, of regulating this particular matter, and we will have to trust to the good sense of the employees and to the judgment of the board to see that it is worked out in a fair and equitable manner.

Hon. Mr. BEIQUE: Honourable gentlemen have evidently not understood the point I was making. I do not object to the board having all the power necessary for protecting the interests of the public and the safety of employees; but they have that power under subsections g and l, as was pointed out by the honourable member for De Lorimier. But there is a great difference between giving the board general power and giving them the specific power of interfering for the purpose of ordering what length the sections shall be and what number of employees should be engaged on different sections.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I would point out that subsection j gives power to the board to limit or regulate the hours and duties of employees or classes of employees with a view to the safety of the public and the employees. If we give the board that power, should we not at the same time give them power to say that since the hours of employment are reduced the number of em-

Hon. Mr. CHOQUETTE.

ployees must be increased? It seems to me that we are not going at all beyond the spirit of the whole Act.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN: I want to endorse the amendment proposed by the honourable leader of the Government, and I do so from practical experience. I have been over railroads in this country on which the public have been treated in the most shameful manner. I allude particularly to the Transcontinental and the Canadian Northern, especially between Montreal and Quebec, and in the northern regions. For ten years I have seen passengers by the hundred, two hundred and three hundred, standing in the mud at Hervey Junction, without any station, and the agent had for shelter only an old cattle car. An immense amount of traffic passes that point. Finally, one day when there were some 250 passengers lined along this box-car, a number having come down from the shanties, and a large number of ladies with little children, all subject to the inclemency of the season and the intemperance of the men, I went into the box-car and wired to Hon. Mr. Bernier, who was then a member of the Railway Commission, that they were not doing their duty in protecting the public, and I asked that a station be built there. During the following week an order went forth to that company to build a station, and it was built. That is an illustration of the need of the Railway Commission having absolute authority over the company. The point before the House is in regard to the services of men. For the past seven years, on the line referred to, four switchmen had to take care of from ten to fourteen miles of track. I have travelled with them on their hand-cars, and when I would point to a piece of the road and say, "Before you know it there will be a wreck here," they would reply, "What can we do? We can't attend to fourteen miles of section." Six miles is all that four men can attend to, and even that is too much; yet that kind of thing has been going on for years. The amendment proposed is the proper one. The Railway Board is not going to be autocratic and order work to be done if it is not necessary, or men to be put on work where they are not needed. This amendment is quite in order for the safety of the public, in justice to the men, and for the companies themselves.

The amendment was agreed to.