

had its Bill before the House six weeks prior to the other. Other things being equal it was the duty of the committee to give its consideration to the first proposition made to parliament. It appeared that a compromise was sought to be arrived at between the parties, but that that idea was not successfully accomplished. Now, Sir, the committee had nothing to do with that compromise. It did not matter a fig to that committee whether the parties made a compromise or not: their duty was to act in the public interest. The real question before us was: Whether the first parties to apply were financially capable to give us a reasonable assurance that the work would be accomplished. That, I think, was apparent to all. I am sorry to say, and I say it advisedly, that the discussion turned practically into a party issue, and the committee invariably separated upon party lines. I found, on inquiry into the incorporators of both Bills, that the board of trade proposition is largely supported by the Conservatives of the city of Toronto, and it would appear also that the members from Toronto supported that contention. Perhaps, on the other side there was an element of the same kind, but that I cannot say. Our duty was to decide what was in the best interests of the country, irrespective of these two parties. If the railway is considered to be for the advantage of Canada it does not matter to us which of these companies should build it. If the company which first applied was competent to construct the work, then it appeared to me that that company was entitled to our consideration. The hon. leader of the opposition urges as an objection that amongst the incorporators of the first company, a number of foreigners were associated with a number of Canadians. Well, Sir, to my mind, that, instead of being a weakness is a great strength. This is not simply a local road from Collingwood to Toronto. It is a great international transportation route, and if it gets freight it expects to get it from the Western States as well as from Manitoba and the North-west. It is therefore of some importance that we should have prominent men from the Western States connected with this railroad, so that it may have the benefit of their influence to divert to this railway the trade which now goes via Buffalo and the Erie Canal. If men on the other side who are worth millions, and who are largely engaged in transportation, become interested in this enterprise, will not their influence be used for the purpose of directing trade through the very channels which we are establishing, which influence we would not have if the enterprise were wholly Canadian? Then, the hon. leader of the opposition said that there were about an equal number from the United States and from Canada connected with this company. But, we are not now considering the Bill as it originally

came before the committee; we are considering it as it is before us at the present moment; and I understand that there are now fourteen Canadians to six Americans; so that his argument does not count for much at this particular period. Then, the hon. leader of the opposition gave the opinion of the hon. Minister of Railways that it was not in the interest of the government to expend money on this road while the deep waterway is under test. So far as that is concerned, the hon. Minister of Railways is perfectly right. It was urged in the committee as well as out of the committee that the government should make this a government road; but, I think, the government would not be discharging its duty if it did so until it had tested the deep waterway on which we have spent so many millions. I am not in favour of the government having anything to do with this railway. It is a private enterprise; and if this company came to-morrow to ask for a bonus for it, I would be one to vote against granting a bonus. I think the government should not bonus a road of this kind until it tests the deep waterway which it has constructed. Nor do I suppose that for four or five years at any rate the government would be asked to take this road over. Suppose this company had fourteen steamers on the upper lakes and sixteen or eighteen steamers on the lower lakes, with all the appurtenances belonging to them, who would agree to the government taking over such an enterprise and trying to run it in the interest of the country? Not a single soul. Why then do hon. gentlemen urge an amendment in favour of the government taking a position which no one would endorse? Why encumber this Bill with a proposition which the Minister of Railways says would compromise the floating of the enterprise by private energy? Then, again, supposing that for the first ten years, instead of making money, the company should actually lose money; because it would take those ten years to divert sufficient trade to compensate them for their investment; and suppose that at the end of those ten years, besides having expended \$5,000,000 on the original cost of the road, they had expended \$2,500,000 more in establishing it on a paying basis, would it then be right for the government to give a month's notice of their intention to take over the whole enterprise, and leave the company with a large loss as the result of their energy, enterprise and perseverance in placing it on a paying basis? I do not think the government would be justified in doing so. Then, the principle contained in this amendment is not usual. One or two measures have been mentioned to-day to which a somewhat similar condition has been attached; but it is not usual. The government have power now to expropriate any public work, and if they have not the power they can secure a special Act giving them the power; so that at any fu-