

SUBSIDIES IN AID OF RAILWAYS  
BILL.

FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD READINGS.

A message was received from the House of Commons with Bill (146) "An Act to authorize the granting of certain subsidies for and in aid of the construction of the lines of railway therein mentioned.

The Bill was read the first time.

HON. MR. PLUMB moved that the Bill be read the second time.

HON. MR. ALEXANDER—When we come to look at a measure like this, giving such large subsidies to a number of railways from end to end of the Dominion, and find that time is not given us to even read the Bill—I can only say that if the Senate submits to the humiliating position in which this Government places it, session after session, bringing before it bills of such importance when it is no longer possible to examine them, I only hope that the people may not judge them very severely.

HON. MR. POWER—I think the hon. gentleman from Woodstock is quite right. This abuse has been in existence, I believe, almost since Confederation, but it has been getting worse with each succeeding year. At the end of every session when the Government are attacked for sending important measures up to this Chamber at the very end of the Session when there is no opportunity to discuss them, there has been a half promise from the leader of the Government that they will try to do better next time: but instead of doing better they keep on doing worse each succeeding year. I cannot help noticing that this abuse exists to a greater extent this session than ever before. It has been true in other sessions that, as to one or two Bills which were detained for a long time in the House of Commons and over which there has been a great deal of discussion, we have not had printed copies here, but this is the first session I know of in which we have had to take a whole succession of Bills, copies of which were not before us, and which we have had no opportunity to consider. This is a Bill containing votes of money, and we cannot alter it; conse-

quently it is of no use opposing it unless we wish to reject it, but still we ought at least to have an opportunity to know what it contains. I believe this Bill has been distributed, but two or three of the Bills which have passed to-day have never been distributed here. If the Senate wishes to be respected throughout the country, and respected by the other branches of Parliament it will have to assert its dignity by rejecting some Government measure introduced, as this has been, at a time when it is too late to give it any consideration. I have not been many years in the Senate, but since I have come here I have observed that this House has continually gone down in public estimation and influence, as one of the branches of Parliament.

HON. MR. ROBATAILLE—Hear, hear.

HON. MR. POWER—The hon. gentleman from Gulf Division is very ready to laugh because I have said something that might be misconstrued. I was not vain enough to suppose that my appearance in the Senate was calculated either to raise or lower the Senate in public estimation, but I submit to the judgment of the country and of Parliament, whether the kind of legislation which has been passed through this House during this session for the benefit of the hon. gentleman and his relatives and connections, is not calculated to lower the House and Parliament generally in the estimation of the country more than anything I have done. The hon. gentleman is the last member of the House who should laugh at the degradation of the Senate. I was about to say, when I was interrupted, that there were three members of the Government in this House when I came in here: some time before that there had been four.

HON. MR. WARK—Five.

HON. MR. POWER—And at an earlier date I believe there had been five. The number has gradually decreased until last year we had, at the close of the session, only one member of the Government, a departmental officer, here. Now we have no departmental officer in the Senate, and I presume if things go on in the same way for another year we shall have no member