

subsidy is discussed, if a subsidy Bill is brought before parliament. I think that some undue and improper comments have been made, and the country is not fully aware of what has taken place in the committee. We have not receded from our position in the slightest degree that there should be some guarantee that the whole line should be built; at the same time it aids the construction, and it seems to me that if this were done, it would meet many of the objections brought forward this afternoon.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. No doubt a great deal of the embarrassment felt by many of the members in dealing with the Bill had its source in the impression which had become general that this company would have aid in some form or other from the government. It was my endeavour, as it was the endeavour of other members of the committee to dissociate that question from the question before the committee. It might be ultimately that aid would be given, and it might be that it would not; and it was only fair to deal with this Bill upon the basis that no aid would be given, inasmuch as it might not be given. It would not be fair to hamper the Bill with conditions which we would not impose upon another company.

Mr. CLARKE. Were not the company obliged to shift the terminus a thousand miles east of where they originally intended to have it.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. That was the action of the committee. I was not in favour of it; but the committee felt disposed to do it and did it.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Were not the members of this House justified in the belief they formed with regard to the prospect of government assistance to the road by the eloquent speech delivered by Sir Charles Rivers Wilson before the committee, wherein he distinctly said that he expected that the government were going to build the road?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I do not know whether my hon. friend (Mr. Hughes, Victoria) expects an answer to that question or not. It did not alter my mind upon the question of what would be a proper action on the part of the committee. It was for the reason that the committee did not think that it ought to impose conditions, there not being any assurance that government assistance would be given, that the motion moved by my hon. friend from Annapolis (Mr. Wade) was voted down as also were other motions of the same character. I treated it simply as any other company asking for a charter would be treated, and I think that that is the principle upon which we ought to deal with this Bill to-day.

Mr. WADE.

Mr. FOWLER. I do not entirely agree with what the hon. member for Annapolis (Mr. Wade) has said that, as this is only a Bill providing for a charter, we have no right to impose conditions. When this company come here and ask for a charter they are asking for certain privileges which it is in the power of this House to grant them, and if we have a right to grant them, we certainly have a right to impose upon the company the conditions which we believe to be in the best interest of the country. We have a right to impose any conditions we see fit; and it seems to me this is a very reasonable condition, and the only test of its reasonableness is whether it is in the best interest of the country.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. Would the hon. gentleman treat a Bill of this kind precisely on the same basis, whether the company was to get any assistance or not? Would he annex conditions in the same way and oblige the company to go on and construct the work without any public aid whatever, just as he would if we were giving it aid?

Mr. FOWLER. I may say this, that in the case of the company receiving pecuniary assistance such as the minister speaks of, the conditions you would impose might be more onerous than the conditions you would impose when they were only asking for a charter. It depends entirely on what you are giving them as to what conditions you would have a right to impose. It is all a question of reasonableness after all. That is the standpoint from which I look at this question, when we are asked to say whether this company shall begin simultaneously at these different points, because they have divided this railway into different sections. Now they must have had some object in view when they made that division. Why not consider the railway as a whole? Why not come here and ask for a charter over this line as a whole, to run from Port Simpson to Moncton? Then the matter might be in a different position. But here they have divided their line into sections, and therefore they would have a perfect right, according to their charter, to ask for aid to build the prairie section, the section that would pay for itself, and leave the other sections unbuilt. Therefore we see this extension that was given as a sop to the maritime provinces, this extension from Quebec—

Mr. WADE. We should not complain if it has been given.

Mr. FOWLER. But if it is no good then we have a right to complain; if it does not fill the bill we have a right to complain. If it does not remedy the grievance which we are complaining of, then we have a right to complain, and that is the point I wish this committee to consider. Because there is no assurance, there is nothing in