

be composed of men who are unfamiliar with municipal institutions, who do not understand the want, the misery and poverty of municipal corporations, and that board may dictate terms and conditions, as the hon. leader of the Senate has declared, and give them the right to force companies to put these wires underground on the condition that the corporation will pay the whole or part of the cost. I quite agree with the hon. leader of the opposition that it is not a clause which should go into the statute-book.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Let it stand.

Hon. Mr. BEIQUÉ—The hon. Secretary of State suggests that this clause be allowed to stand, but I think it but proper that I should say a word in explanation of the clause. I am quite sure the hon. gentleman from Victoria does not understand the first word about it.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—I know too much about it.

Hon. Mr. BEIQUÉ—And it is the only reason we can account for his wild way of talking. I have noticed the hon. gentleman cannot rise to criticise any suggestion made by any hon. member of this House without speaking of it as being a wild suggestion and using extreme terms. The hon. gentleman deals with this clause as if it were to affect telegraph and telephone companies and companies for the sale of light, heat and power. There is nothing of the kind, and it is easy to see that he does not understand the first word about the clause or about the suggestion. We are dealing, not with telegraph companies, not with lighting companies, we are dealing exclusively with railway companies, and under the first paragraph of clause 195 what is provided? It is provided that railway companies may place poles and wires in streets of cities, towns and villages with the consent of the municipality, and subsection 2 of the same clause provides that if the municipality does not give its consent, then it shall be open to the board to grant the permission. Now we have so far accepted the principle as embodied in the clause. What is the object of the clause? The

object is to provide that when that consent has been given by the municipal corporation, or in the absence of the municipal corporation, when the poles and wires have been placed in the streets with the authorization of the board, whenever a municipal council of any city or town or incorporated village deem it advisable to have the wires placed underground that they may have their desire carried into effect, and it will be then for the same tribunal which grants them the permission to determine upon what terms it shall be done. I have drafted the clause in that way because we are dealing with vested rights, and the clause should affect not only the future, but all railway companies which are in possession of streets for that purpose. Dealing with vested rights, I think it is but proper to let the conditions be determined by an independent body. If we leave it entirely to the municipality, then there would be a danger that the municipality would commit an injustice in dealing with vested rights. The hon. gentleman thinks that the municipalities would be much better as they are. What is the meaning of subsection (g) as it stands? It says:

In case efficient means are devised for carrying any such lines or wires underground.

Is it not perfectly well known that the means exist and have existed for years? The wires are placed underground in New York, Paris and London. They are placed in Toronto to a large extent, and also in Montreal to a considerable extent. It supposes a new condition of things. It supposes that with the means that are now known the Act should take effect. And then what does it provide? It contemplates an Act of parliament requiring the wires to be placed underground. As I stated yesterday, is it reasonable to say that any Act of parliament of that kind shall be passed? No. It is an initiative which can only, in the nature of things, be taken by a municipal body, because it will apply only to large cities and not to the whole country, and for fifty years or one hundred years there is no doubt we will see poles and wires strung overhead instead of being underground. Therefore it seems to me that the suggestion is not as wild as the hon. member suggests, but that it should com-