

possible to find in all the world a more independent set of men than those who sit upon these committees; and the country has no right to complain, it cannot complain because there is no reason for it. No wrong or injustice has ever been done by Parliament to either the people or to the companies. The members of this House have always tried, to the best of their ability, to do what is right and just for the companies, while always safeguarding the rights of the people. I think that in dealing with my hon. friend's Bill, all these matters should first be considered. We have no right to confiscate the property of these people, we have no right to confiscate the property of railway corporations, or to pass railway legislation that may impair to any extent the contract which this country has made with them. The honour of the people of this country is involved in the treatment of this question. When my hon. friend suggests that railway corporations should be compelled to grant second class tickets, on one fare and a return fare basis, why does he not make the Bill apply to steamboats, and stages, and other transportation companies throughout the country? Why should it be directed against railway corporations alone? I believe my hon. friend, on reflection, will come to the conclusion that this Bill has been introduced without sufficient information, and that he will decide, either to refer it to a committee, or to withdraw it altogether. In any case he should be in a position to furnish information upon the points I have alluded to before he asks Parliament to enact such a law.

Mr. BENNETT. The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat (Mr. Lister) stated at the outset of his remarks that in the past many Bills had been introduced in this House largely with a view to effect. Surely the hon. gentleman cannot complain of legislation of this kind without his mind taking him back to motions made by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House when they were in Opposition. There was our old friend the Bill which was constantly being introduced by the hon. member for North York (Mr. Mulock), setting forth that it was a great abuse for members of the House to accept positions under the Crown. Yet we see hon. gentlemen opposite at the very inception of their term of office breaking that rule. Then there was the measure for the abolition of the duty on binding twine. That, too, has been buried with other Bills of the past. Then, again, there was the proposition put forward that a reduction should be made in the salary of the Governor General.

Mr. SPEAKER. I desire to ask the hon. gentleman to what section of the Bill he is addressing himself. I think he should confine himself to the Bill under discussion.

Mr. LISTER.

Mr. LaRIVIERE. The hon. gentleman is talking on railway fares, and I think we can take a ride.

Mr. SPEAKER. I think the hon. gentleman is taking a ride too far.

Mr. BENNETT. I think the examples I have already given will justify the statement made by the hon. gentleman that too often legislation is attempted in this House for the purpose of effect alone. I do not, however, view the proposition of the hon. member for Glengarry (Mr. McLennan) in that light, and the answer put forward by the hon. member for Lambton is against any interference with the rights or privileges of railway companies on the ground that it may affect or interfere with their earnings or possible dividends to stockholders.

Mr. LISTER. They pay no dividends—no railway companies here pay dividends.

Mr. BENNETT. It may happen that they may do so in time to come. Parliament interferes with railway companies by an Act providing that they shall not charge more than 3 cents per mile to those who may wish to avail themselves of the opportunity of or privilege of riding over them. If Parliament can interfere so as to prescribe a 3-cent-per-mile rate as a fair remuneration, I believe Parliament is, to that extent, interfering with the rights and privileges of the railway companies.

Mr. LISTER. That is in their charters.

Mr. BENNETT. If necessary, perhaps you might insert this proposed change in every charter and make it retroactive.

Mr. LISTER. It would be ex post facto legislation.

Mr. BENNETT. Parliament has often considered this fact, that railways may be interfered with to this extent, that they shall not be allowed to exercise their own free will as to apparatus in connection with their cars, for coupling purposes and otherwise, and Parliament intervenes and provides that at very great expense, regardless of the feelings of the railway companies, that they shall have automatic couplers and other arrangements which must result in putting the companies to great expense in making such changes. A railway company has a perfect right to conduct their business as they please, and it is the privilege or right, at all events, of Parliament to interfere, and declare that the company shall do this or that for the protection of the lives of their employees. Although, at any time, in the event of an accident occurring to an employee a right of action exists against the company. Then, again, I believe that the law respecting common carriers would hold this, that he who proffers to a railway company his goods to be carried has a perfect right to have them carried on that railway, and in the event of the destruction of goods,