

erating the passage of the Bill through this House will be to deal with it by the Committee of the Whole House.

I am having very full explanations of the different amendments to the existing law printed, which I am sure will prove of service and advantage to all honourable gentlemen who care to study the Act as it is proposed to consolidate and amend it. I hope that these explanations will be printed and ready for distribution by the time we proceed with the consideration of the Bill in committee.

For the information of honourable gentlemen who may not have been in the House or who may not have attended the meetings of the committee last session, I would say that the consideration of the Bill by the committee of last session was almost completed at the time of prorogation. I have no doubt that had there been two or three more sittings of the committee we should have been in a position to report to the Chamber the Bill in its entirety.

With these explanations, honourable gentlemen, and in anticipation of your being furnished with a brief as to all the changes we propose making in the Act, I intend to move that this Bill be referred to the Committee of the Whole House for consideration to-morrow.

Hon. HEWITT BOSTOCK: Honourable gentlemen, we spent considerable time and did a great deal of work on this Bill last session. As honourable gentlemen know, it has a tremendous number of clauses and will likely require considerable time for consideration. The honourable leader of the Government has said that this session is not likely to be a long one, and the question has occurred to me whether the Bill is likely to become law this session or not. The honourable leader of the Government has not said anything about the Government's railway policy at the present time. This Bill, being a general railway measure, might have to be considerably amended if the policy which it has been suggested the Government might adopt with regard to the railways of the country should be put into force. After we had spent much time over a Bill requiring a great deal of consideration, we should find that the whole policy of the Act would have to be changed if the Government were to take over practically all the railways of the country and have them operated as Government railways or under Government control. The whole situation would be very different from that which we are consider-

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED.

ing to-day. It seems to me that the Government might have made some statement before asking us to proceed with this Bill. Since the Railway Bill was introduced last session the policy of the Government with regard to the Canadian Northern railway has been announced up to a certain point, but I do not think anybody is quite clear at the present moment as to what is the condition of things with regard to that railway—whether it is actually being run by the Government or is still managed by a board, the Government supplying the money for the purpose of carrying on the business of the railway. These are questions about which we really should have some information when we are considering the clauses of this Bill.

Another question that occurs to my mind is that regarding matters like telephones and telegraphs. These matters are dealt with in clauses of the Bill which apply to all telephone and telegraph companies, whether they are connected with railways or are separate companies altogether. It has occurred to me that this would really be better legislation if those companies that are simply operating telegraph or telephone lines, apart altogether from railways, were governed by a general telegraph or telephone Act, and if the clauses of the Railway Act were to deal with telephone and telegraph companies only in so far as they are connected with railways. The same observation applies to the power companies. The tendency since the establishment of the Railway Commission seems to have been to bring all such matters under that commission and, inasmuch as they are brought under the one commission, to include all legislation of this kind in one Act. This tendency seems liable to lead to a certain amount of difficulty and confusion in dealing with legislation. A Bill is drafted with the idea, at the beginning, of legislating solely for railways, and then clauses are inserted which deal with companies having nothing to do with railways. It would be better to pass separate Acts, and to confine this legislation simply to railways and matters connected with railway work. Those are points which I think should be taken into careful consideration.

The honourable leader of the Government has said that he is giving us a statement showing the alterations and additions that are made in the Bill, but I do not find in this Bill as it is printed to-day any notification showing the actual changes made in the clauses. It would be easier for us to consider it if the clauses of the Bill were