

After a day or two had elapsed they passed a Bill amalgamating the whole of the railroads now composing the Midland system, and when called upon, in the interests of some of my constituents who had given bonuses, and by those of the hon. member for West Elgin, who had also given bonuses, to some of these roads being amalgamated, that Legislature refused to order these companies to give back the bonuses or make some provision that would give the municipalities some of the benefits, for which they had subscribed their money. The Legislature refused, on the ground that this amalgamation should be sanctioned whether the local companies were bonused or not; and the amalgamation was completed, the Grand Trunk Company having, notoriously, the control of the Legislature. That just shows that we cannot always look to the Legislature to prevent amalgamation. At the same time, I confess, that I do not see that any beneficial result to the public at large, can follow from going further with this Bill, or letting it go to the Railway Committee. If my hon. friend thinks further discussion would enable him to elaborate something that would attain the objects the public have in view, which are not attained by this Bill, or if he thinks that the Bill could be so amended or re-drafted in Committee, as to meet the objects sought to be attained, I have no objection to acquiesce in its being referred to the Railway Committee; but I am convinced it will be found these objects are very difficult, if not impossible of attainment, by the Bill before the House. That Bill does not in the slightest degree reach the object sought for.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). It is very clear that the hon. member for North Simcoe, in endeavoring to make his Bill law, need not expect any sympathy or support from any person connected with the railway companies. The object of the Bill is to put the railway companies under the control, if not of Parliament, at all events of a Commission; and he need not expect to get assistance in the slightest degree from any person connected with railway companies. The companies want no controlling check by the Legislature. They want to have everything in their own hands, as they have now practically. I think this is the third time the hon. member for North Simcoe has introduced this Bill. I may say when it was first introduced in Parliament I felt disposed to oppose it. I was inclined to entertain the opinion that perhaps the less we interfered with corporations of this kind the better in the public interests; but a careful examination of the subject has convinced me that it is the imperative duty of Parliament to interfere in this matter. The experience in the Mother Country, the difficult problems that have been solved there through the instrumentality of a Railway Commission, the experience of the great public, the United States, extending over a number of years, the report of the Committee appointed, I think, by the State of New York, in 1850, which had under review and consideration the whole railway traffic in that State and the adjoining States, the mass of valuable evidence obtained on the subject, and the valuable report that was submitted by, I think, what was called the Hepburn Committee,—all this convinced me thoroughly that it was the absolute imperative duty of the Legislature to interfere in some way. Now, my hon. friend has introduced his Bill three times, in 1880, 1881 and now in 1882. In 1881, the Bill only reached its first reading, and, for some reason best known to the hon. member for North Simcoe, the Bill was not pressed. I advised my hon. friend to press the Bill and take the sense of the House on the question, because I felt satisfied that, with our experience in the last few years and notably the last year or two, the majority of the House would pronounce in favor of the principle set forth on the Bill. I am perfectly satisfied that the vast mass of the people is in favor of some legislation in the direction indicated in the Bill of my hon. friend. I am

Mr. CAMERON (Victoria),

not going to make a speech on the question just now, because, as I understood from the remarks of the hon. Minister of Railways, he is not opposed to the principle of the Bill.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Hear, hear.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). I understand he has not, at all events, used any argument in opposition to the principle of the Bill, but is willing to let it be referred to the Railway Committee. I advise my hon. friend from North Simcoe not to refer this Bill to the Railway Committee, but rather to have it referred to a Select Committee, who will take the trouble to put into shape what I believe my hon. friend is attempting to arrive at, but which, perhaps, is not exactly comprised in the Bill submitted. The hon. Minister of Railways though not opposed to the principle of the Bill, suggested one or two difficulties. I think these difficulties, especially one of them, were greatly exaggerated. The hon. Minister stated we have now too many Courts in the Dominion; that we created a Supreme Court; that there are some serious objections to the existence and continuance of that Court, and that it costs the country \$50,000 a year. It appears to me that has nothing to do with the question. The real point is, whether the people desire it. If they do, there should be some tribunal created for the purpose of carrying into effect these provisions. The hon. Minister of Railways exaggerated, in my humble judgment, the difficulties.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Not unusual.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). Perhaps it is not unusual. On this occasion, however, the hon. Minister has exaggerated the difficulties very considerably. No man has a higher respect for the eminent abilities of the hon. member who has introduced this Bill than I have, and it is quite possible he would not withdraw from the practice of his profession for the small sum of \$20,000 a year. But the hon. Minister must recollect that there are in Canada men just as eminent in the legal profession as the hon. member for North Simcoe. We must recollect that the Judges of our Courts of Appeal in Ontario and Quebec, are men selected from the best ranks of the profession on account of their eminent abilities, and these men are willing to take these positions at a salary of \$5,000 per year; yet the hon. Minister thinks we cannot get men able to deal with the questions likely to come up under this Bill at a salary under \$10,000 or \$20,000 a year. The hon. Minister knows well that we can get first-class lawyers, both in Ontario and Quebec, to occupy positions in the Supreme Court or Court of Appeal, at \$5,000 per year. The Judges in the Supreme Court here are only paid \$7,000, and surely better men than they are could not be desired to sit on the Commission provided for by this Bill. The hon. gentleman knows well that the three Judges or Commissioners could be obtained at a salary of not exceeding \$15,000 or \$20,000 a year altogether. But my hon. friend, in his Bill, does not propose there shall be a fixed salary, but provides for payment by fees. To that I am opposed. If the Judges are to be independent and above suspicion they should be paid a fixed salary, as in England, and should not be open to the suspicion even that they might be influenced by the railway companies, as they would be if paid by fees from the railway companies. It may be quite true that the Bill does not provide for some of the difficulties to which objection is taken—the difficult problems that are constantly cropping up with respect to the carrying trade and traffic over our Dominion Railways—but it is a very simple matter, if the Bill is not perfect in that respect, to make it perfect; it is an easy matter, if the Bill gets a second reading, and is referred to a Special Committee, to give that Committee full authority to deal with every possible class of cases that can arise between railway companies and individuals, or between railway companies themselves. The hon. member