

ing this city, and a petition signed by a large number of the citizens of Ottawa has been laid on the table, in which this Bill is denounced as an invasion of the rights of the city. But this House, for some reason or another, proposes to override the rights of the people of Ottawa. What we see here to-day is a parliament prepared, not only to invade municipal rights, but public and provincial rights; and the people outside are taking observations of these things. If parliament will persist in doing this, they will have to account to the common sense of the public. This proceeding cannot be justified on any pretext that it is in the interest of the Dominion. It is not in the interest of the Dominion that parliament should be used to break down the rights of any municipality. We find that the interests of great private corporations are protected and advanced here, and these corporations enabled to evade their obligations.

There was a solemn obligation on the part of this company not to amalgamate. It is seeking power to-day to make an amalgamation, and its object is nothing else than that it may be in a position to increase its charges for electricity to its consumers the citizens of Ottawa. This parliament is setting an example to the legislatures of this country to leave out of consideration the rights of the people wherever those rights are opposed to the interests of private corporations. I object to this, as I have objected to it; and I shall vote against it. I believe that when the people realize what this movement on the part of corporations means, they will put it down. I should like to see the hon. member for Ottawa (Mr. Stewart) make a fight to a finish. And I should like to hear from the other member for Ottawa (Mr. Belcourt) that we may know what he says about this interference with the rights of the people.

Mr. BELCOURT. Will my hon. friend (Mr. Maclean) permit me? He surely will not say that he does not know where I stand in this matter. I have expressed myself clearly.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. Yes, but in these cases you have to do a good deal of talking too. Persistent talking and presentation of the case of the people must have a good effect. I believe that this Bill could be blocked; it could be prevented from going through. I can say that I have done my best to put in a word for the rights of the people of Ottawa. The effort may not succeed now. Hon. gentlemen opposite make fun of municipal rights, and members from one province in particular like to take part in the invasion upon municipal rights. But the day is coming soon, when this parliament will be taken to task for the way it has treated the municipal rights of the people not only in this province but all over the country. These companies may lobby this House and make themselves great friends of

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the people in power; but I say it is a shame that the political debts of hon. gentlemen opposite should be paid at the expense of the municipal rights of the people of this city.

Mr. H. H. MILLER (South Grey). I saw in the funny column of the Toronto 'World' the other day a statement to the effect that the hon. member for South York (Mr. W. F. Maclean) had stirred up supporters of the government to vote against this Bill. I have been voting against this Bill on every occasion, and I intend to vote against it to-night; but not because of, but in spite of the eloquent tirade of the hon. gentleman (Mr. W. F. Maclean).

Mr. T. S. SPROULE (East Grey). I am glad to have the opportunity of putting myself on record against the principle of this measure, against the interference by parliament in contracts made by two parties outside. I said the other night, and I repeat, that parliament should not assist one party to a contract to dishonour that contract at the expense of the other party. But that is what we are doing in this case. I am opposed also to parliament playing into the hands of a monopoly, as it will be doing by putting through this Bill, for there can be no other object on the part of this company than to become possessed of the stock of competing companies in order that it may establish a monopoly in its line of business in the city of Ottawa. This is the tendency of the age, especially in commercial life, and parliament should not assist or endorse it in any way, but should rather fight against it and maintain the rights of the people. The people of Ottawa are plainly opposed to this measure. They gave evidence of that as strongly as any people could in the petition sent to the Prime Minister. Over 2,000 citizens of Ottawa begged of him to oppose this measure on the ground that it was against the interest of the city. I take it that that means that the representatives of 2,000 families signed this petition, because I assume that it is only the heads of families that would be likely to sign it. The average family is said to be composed of five, so that this means that over 10,000 people of the city of Ottawa have petitioned against this measure. Yet, I am sure that not one-fifth of the people of Ottawa were asked to sign the petition, or that petition would have had many more signatures than appear upon it. Is not this an evidence of the desire of the residents of Ottawa that this Bill should not be passed? Is not this plain evidence that we are going contrary to the will of the people of Ottawa in a matter in which they are deeply interested? It is said that this company cannot earn a reasonable dividend. And the evidence given of that is their own statement, not verified or analysed to ascertain whether it is correct or not. We who have been in the House any length of time have often heard this