

After hearing the opinions of a number of men representing outside corporations, the Chairman, Hon. Mr. Davis, said the desire was to have the provisions of the Conmee bill made more workable, and the subject was referred to a sub-committee for consideration, composed of Messrs. Conmee, Foy, Graham, Hill, Pardee, Kribs, Pattullo, Lucas and McKay.

Street Car Legislation.

A very warm fight took place in the Railway Committee of the Legislature yesterday over Mr. Hill's bill to amend the street railway act. The effects of the bill as reported are important, and among other things compel the adoption of a suitable life-saving fender, to be approved by the Engineer of the Public Works Department; also a passenger rate of two cents per mile. The member for West York put up a gallant fight against an influential body of street railway officials from different cities.

The first amendment was a clause providing that electric cars shall be equipped with a proper and life-saving fender. The clause was amended on the suggestion of Mr. Bicknell, for the Toronto Railway, so as to provide that all fenders shall be approved by the Engineer of the Public Works Department.

Municipal Control.

The second clause seeking to give power in the regulation of electric railways to all municipalities through which they ran, instead of merely the County Council, so as to better insure the living up to the agreement was adopted, with the amendment that the time tables, renewal of franchise and freight and passenger rates shall remain within control of the county.

The clause making it necessary to fill in the space between the tracks flush with the highway was withdrawn, the matter being left to by-law regulation.

Rates at Two Cents a Mile.

Considerable discussion took place on the clause fixing the passenger rate at five cents for the first three miles and two cents a mile beyond that. Mr. Barwick said the Metropolitan had never paid a dividend, and had sold its bonds on the three-cent fare basis. Mr. Hill retorted that the company's rates were by agreement subject to legislative enactment, and that their rates were the highest in Ontario, where they did not have to purchase the right of way. On a vote the committee decided in favor of a two-cent mile rate.

The clause compelling the conspicuous posting in the cars and public offices of a schedule of the fares to be collected was adopted.

A Strong Penalty.

The committee declined to accept a clause submitted by Assistant City Solicitor Drayton providing a penalty of \$100 for each day a company operates without guard wires, and \$10 per day for each car operated without a suitable fender or without two men engaged thereon. The amendment may be introduced in the House.

The last clause, providing that the act should apply to every street, electric or other railway companies, and to every agreement or contract of such railway for the use of highways, was carried and the bill reported as amended.

Private Bills Committee.

The Private Bills Committee held a very brief session, and reported two bills, when it was found there was no quorum left and business ceased. Those reported were the bill incorporating the Ottawa Young Men's Christian Association and the bill granting power to Port Perry to give a bonus of \$5,000 to Ontario County for the erection of the County House of Refuge in that town. The Collingwood bill was reconsidered, and it was decided the Cramp Smelter should pay school taxes on their plant to the amount of their \$700,000 fixed assessment.

Gilphie a Sound Boat.

In the Public Accounts Committee yesterday Mr. Matheson sought to make it appear that the Government paid far more for the fisheries protection steamer Gilphie than she was worth, and that the boat was unseaworthy. Capt. John Simpson, an old master builder, of Owen Sound, gave evidence to this effect, but it appeared that he had only examined the steamer for a couple of hours on two afternoons, and had not seen the whole of the vessel, because she was full of ice and water. As against his testimony, James Rhody of Chatham, who rebuilt the Gilphie; Robert Abbey, a shipbuilder, of Owen Sound; Mr. A. F. Bowman of Southampton, the late owner of the vessel, and Mr. George E. Smith, sub-collector of customs at Southampton, swore that the steamer was perfectly sound and seaworthy, and that the Government got full value for the purchase money. Mr. Bowman said he bought the Gilphie for \$2,050 and expended between \$1,400 and \$1,500 upon her. He was quite willing to take the vessel back if he could get her. Hon. Messrs. Stratton and Latchford took an active part in the examination of the witnesses, and brought out several telling facts. It transpired that the late owner of the Gilphie is a brother of Mr. C. M. Bowman, M. P. P., but the latter had no interest in or connection with the transaction in any way.

The Barberry Shrub.

Mr. Taylor's bill to give municipalities the power to destroy the barberry shrub was considered by a special committee yesterday afternoon, and after the statements of several experts had been received the bill was reported.

The Lever Agreement.

It is said that the opponents of the Lever agreement have succeeded in getting the matter re-opened, and that the bill will again come before the Private Bills Committee this morning.