

spent months in determining a question of very considerable complexity, we in this Parliament, by some means which he has not defined, shall sit in further appeal, not only from the arbitrators, but from the Supreme Court of Canada itself. I do not know quite what he means in that regard. Does he mean that there is to be a real adjudication by this Parliament sitting as a judicial tribunal? If he means that seriously, how does he propose to work it out? Does he propose, after this matter has been gone into before the arbitrators upon evidence and with counsel, that we shall take their award here in Parliament, appoint a committee of Parliament, and traverse the exact ground that has been traversed by the tribunal which this Parliament has created for that purpose? Does he mean to say that any committee of this House would deal with this matter in the same businesslike and effective way that a Board of Arbitrators would deal with it? If he means a mere mock inquiry by Parliament into these matters, that is one thing. His proposition dismisses itself in the statement I have made, if that is his proposal. If on the other hand, he means that there is to be a committee of this House to do the work which the Board of Arbitration and the Supreme Court of Canada will already have performed under this Bill, then I venture to say that the work need not be done twice. His proposal in that case should be that a committee of Parliament ought to deal with the matter in the first instance, and that we should have no reference to arbitrators or to the Supreme Court of Canada, but have a committee selected from both sides of this House sit for months and hear evidence and the testimony of expert witnesses—go into all the intricacies of this question and arrive at a conclusion. Is there any hon. gentleman in this House who believes that such work and the determination which it involves could be done as effectively by a committee of this Parliament as by a board of arbitrators? I venture to say there is not a single one—not even excepting the hon. member (Mr. Pugsley) himself—who believes for one moment that such would be the case.

Let us have either the one or the other. If we are to have an inquiry by arbitrators, let us get arbitrators appointed whose award will be respected. If there is any doubt about the award, let us, as this Bill proposes, have the award inquired into by the Supreme Court of Canada. Let us not em-

[Sir Robert Borden.]

bark upon the absolute foolishness, in my judgment, of having that done by the Board of Arbitrators in the first instance, by the Supreme Court of Canada in the second instance, and then set up a tribunal in this Parliament and do it for many weary months in the third instance.

Mr. PUGSLEY: If the award was unanimous it would not go to the Supreme Court.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Very good, I am willing to meet my hon. friend on that ground. I say that after a board of arbitrators—the arbitrator for the company, the arbitrator for the Government, and the third arbitrator—have made a thorough and exhaustive inquiry into the questions which arise in this matter, my hon. friend would hardly be prepared to stand in his place and say that we ought to embark on the same inquiry before a committee of this House. Upon what ground does he base any such proposal? He has given no reason in favour of it.

We might have left the proposal he has submitted to-night to the judgment of the House without any answer to his address on the subject, because he has not advanced one substantial argument from first to last; and if there is anything that could be called a vestige of argument in what he has proposed in support of his amendment, I am prepared to show that on repeated occasions in the past he has thought no such proposal worthy of consideration for a moment.

There is this further to be said about his proposal, that it would render the Bill absolutely unworkable, as I understand it. Section 1 as amended by my hon. friend would leave everything in the air; it would practically declare that the stock was not to be immediately acquired in an absolute way. But section 2 declares that it may be so immediately acquired. His proposal conflicts also with section 3. He saw that, and in the course of his remarks he proposed some elaborate and complex amendments by which the people of this country were to provide money for aiding this road in the event of Parliament eventually determining that the road ought not to be taken over at the price fixed. What would that amount to? Simply this: The Government of Canada would ask Parliament to vote \$20,000,000 or \$25,000,000 out of the public exchequer for the purpose of keeping this concern alive—for, if Parliament should not approve of the award, my hon. friend says the stock is to be handed back. Now what is the net result of that? In the