

The government proceeded to consider several propositions. They considered a proposition of building a government road, considered it carefully, as I am well aware, and rejected that proposition.

They considered several propositions! We know what the proposition to build a government road means, and we know the proposition which the government eventually brought down to this House. But what are the other propositions, one of which has been referred to, not only by the hon. member for North Norfolk, but by the hon. Minister of the Interior (Mr. Sifton) himself? But the hon. member for North Norfolk made a further reference to this matter, which is to be found in 'Hansard' of 1903, page 8495:

We were at the parting of the ways. We had, on the one hand, the policy recommended of building a government road. On the other hand, we had the policy recommended of assisting the construction of a road in the old fashioned way of granting subsidies.

Now, what was that 'policy recommended of building a government road?' Was that the policy propounded by Mr. Blair in the memorandum, about the publication of which so much has been said in this House? Can it mean anything else? Does it mean anything else? Is it possible that the proposition of Mr. Blair, said to have been kept secret, was disclosed to Mr. Charlton last year? Can there be any denial of that? Will my right hon. friend deny it now?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes, most decidedly.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Well, I would like to ask my right hon. friend how the hon. member for North Norfolk became aware of the policy of building a government road, to which he refers in making these remarks?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I have only to say that I cannot answer for what my hon. friend from North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) said, but when the hon. gentleman (Mr. R. L. Borden) asks me if my hon. friend from North Norfolk had any communication of the memorandum of Mr. Blair, I submit most emphatically that he never had.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I accept without hesitation the word of my right hon. friend. I accept it in the usual sense, not in the parliamentary sense, but I still think that my right hon. friend will not deny that I am entitled to entertain a strong opinion as to that most extraordinary statement made by the hon. member for North Norfolk. If no member of the cabinet disclosed that proposed policy to him, how could it possibly happen that he became so well aware of the policy which had been before the government? How was it possible for him to be aware of what the government was considering? Let me read his language again:

The government proceeded to consider several propositions.

How does he know that the government proceeded to consider several propositions? Was he a member of the Privy Council? I am not aware that the hon. gentleman has been ever elevated to that rank, or that he has participated in the deliberations of the government. He says:

They considered a proposition of building a government road, considered it carefully, as I am well aware, and rejected that proposition.

How did the hon. member for North Norfolk become well aware of what the government had considered carefully? The government would not consider anything carefully unless they considered it in Council, I suppose. That hon. gentleman, I am bound to assume from the statement of my right hon. friend, had no information as to what was going on at the Privy Council. Are we to assume that he was listening at the door? What are we to assume as to the source of his information? My right hon. friend sat in the House and listened to that statement and made no comment upon it. Did he regard it as singular that the hon. member for North Norfolk should have made that statement as to the private and secret deliberations of the government in Council? Did he go to him afterwards and ask the source of his information? Was there any indignation on that occasion exhibited by my right hon. friend or the members of his government? I do not recollect that there was any scene in the House when the hon. gentleman did make that statement.

We had, on the one hand, the policy recommended of building a government road.

The policy recommended! Recommended by whom? Could it be possible that that hon. gentleman was talking of the recommendation of the Minister of Railways and Canals, which was submitted to Council? One would most certainly interpret his language in that way, if we had not the assurance of my right hon. friend that no such communication was made to the hon. member for North Norfolk.

But a still more startling statement is made in regard to this matter by the same hon. gentleman, and I would like my right hon. friend to take clause 10 of the proposals of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company and read it while I am reading what the hon. member for North Norfolk said in regard to the proposals which had been submitted to the government. In order to relieve my right hon. friend from the necessity of doing that, perhaps I had better read clause 10 again. Clause 10 of the proposal is as follows:

10th. That the conditions referred to in clause 4, upon which your petitioners would undertake the carrying out of the proposed work, may be set forth as follows: