

other hand we did not have the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Prefontaine) who was expected to speak or the Minister of Justice (Mr. Fitzpatrick) who also was expected to speak. We put up other members only in order to keep up our side of the debate, so that hon. gentlemen opposite might not be able to charge our members with being afraid to speak on the subject. We on this side were perfectly willing to keep up the discussion. But, when it came to Wednesday, the day agreed upon for the vote, the members on this side had been informed and were ready for the division. We did not object to the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Bell), or the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Clarke) or the hon. member for North Victoria (Mr. Sam. Hughes) speaking. But when I returned after dinner, I happened to go up to your chair, Mr. Speaker, and was informed that none of the members on the opposition side except the hon. member for Prince Edward (Mr. Alcorn) would speak. I went to the chief whip of the opposition, and he informed me that the hon. member for Pictou, the hon. member for West Toronto, the hon. member for North Victoria had decided that they would not speak; and that after the hon. member for Winnipeg (Mr. Puttee) had concluded, the hon. member for Prince Edward county (Mr. Alcorn) would be the last to speak on that side. That is what the chief whip on the other side told me when I told him that the Prime Minister would close the debate. I heard, before the Prime Minister had spoken, that the hon. member for Pictou was likely to speak, and I could scarcely believe it. When the member for Pictou rose, I went to the chief whip of the opposition and asked him how it was that that hon. gentleman (Mr. Bell) was speaking after we had decided that the Prime Minister should close the debate. And the chief whip of the opposition told me then that the hon. member for Pictou was speaking against his wishes, that he had not agreed to his speaking, but that the hon. gentleman was speaking on his own account. Yet, he had informed me only an hour or two before the hon. member for Pictou, the hon. member for North Victoria and the hon. member for West Toronto had decided that they would not speak at that time. The only thing I objected to and the only violation of the course we had agreed upon that the debate should close after the Prime Minister was that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bell) spoke after that agreement.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES (North Victoria). Inasmuch as I happened to be one of the parties concerned in this matter, and chanced to be standing here when the arrangement was made between the chief whip of the government side and the chief whip of the opposition, I may say that the understanding was that the member for Pictou, the member for Toronto and myself were to withhold our speeches until possibly

Mr. CALVERT.

some other occasion during the session, in order to carry out an agreement entered into by the two whips. I may say that I objected to the two whips coming to any such agreement, that they should assume power to close the debate whenever it suited their wishes. However, at the request of the whip on this side I acquiesced in the arrangement. The distinct understanding in my mind at the time was that the member for Prince Edward was to close the debate. Later on the chief whip of the government side informed me that though there were to be no more addresses, but of course, he said, the Prime Minister may say a few words. I knew nothing more about it. But I may say that the understanding was that the member for Prince Edward alone was to close the debate, and there was no talk at the time of the Prime Minister making a speech, or an impassioned appeal such as he did. I may say that after the Prime Minister had spoken I was very much annoyed, and felt much inclined to get up, because I felt the compact had been broken, and I felt inclined to go on, late as the hour was, and make my address on that occasion, because the arrangement, to my mind, had been violated, in spirit at all events, by the speech of the Prime Minister on that occasion. These are the facts as I understood them when the arrangement was made between the two whips. I know for a fact that it was the chief whip on our side who induced the member for Toronto to remain in his seat, and I know that he asked the member for Pictou to remain in his seat. I may say that I think it is hardly the proper thing for the two whips to come to any definite understanding that the division on a question shall take place at a certain hour or on a certain evening.

Motion (Mr. Bell) to adjourn, negatived.

GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC RAILWAY.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister) moved the second reading of Bill (No. 72) To amend the National Transcontinental Railway Act.

Mr. E. F. CLARKE (West Toronto). Mr. Speaker, after the statements which have been made by the hon. gentlemen who occupy the position of whips of the respective parties, I need not offer any explanation or apology to the House for taking up some time in a further discussion of a matter of national importance. I hoped to have the privilege, in common with my hon. friend from North Victoria (Mr. Hughes) my hon. friend from Pictou (Mr. Bell), and some other gentlemen whose names have been mentioned in connection with that discussion, of saying something before the division was taken on Wednesday evening. But that opportunity having been denied me, and the matter appearing to me of such pressing and vital importance, I deem it