

ject. But if he had made for two years a deep study of this subject, when it came before this House for settlement was the time to give the country the benefit of this study. He said however not a word on this subject. It seemed to him, as it did to everybody else, that the arrangement was a fair one. But he went to British Columbia and there he came within the magnetic influence of Mr. McBride, and he swallowed the bait that Mr. McBride offered him. My hon. colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) called it a bribe. What else could it be called? My hon. friend (Mr. R. L. Borden) spoke of the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Pugsley) as having said that the Conservative party had had a large fund, and the only reply we heard from my hon. friend was that he was ready to show that we were just as bad as he and his party were.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I said nothing of the kind. The right hon. gentleman, I think, will remember that.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Certainly not. Of course he said nothing of the kind.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. What then did I say?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. My hon. friend did not say: You are just as bad as we. But he said this: Give me a commission, and I will show that you have spent just as much as we have.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Neither did I say that.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I cannot quote the ipsissima verba, but if the hon. gentleman meant anything else, I would like to know what he meant.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I meant just what I said—that we were ready for any investigation.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Exactly, ready for any investigation, and that investigation shall be not only into what was charged by the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Pugsley) against the Conservative party, but into some other charges against the Liberal party also.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Does the right hon. gentleman object?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That is not the question. But if the hon. gentleman's meaning was not that the Liberal party is no better than his, I do not know what he meant. This however is not the question. I agree rather with my hon. friend in his concluding remarks when he said that there has been too much money spent in elections and that it was advisable to restrict that expenditure as much as possible. But if it be the object of my hon. friend to have clean politics, is it clean politics to have

this question of the British Columbia subsidy, which was settled by this conference, re-opened again? Does my hon. friend call that clean politics when he went to British Columbia and said to Mr. McBride: Just as soon as I am in office, I shall reopen this question and give you the increased subsidy you ask for. If that be clean politics, in the opinion of my hon. friend, I think we had better let the electors of this country judge between us.

I shall say no more on this occasion, though some of the questions I have discussed will bear further elucidation as the session progresses. This much, however, I will say to-day. We have been eleven years in office. I have no doubt—indeed I am quite sure—that we have made many mistakes and have committed many errors. But when the time comes at the end of this parliament, to go before our judges, for my part I shall submit with confidence our record with all its mistakes and errors against the wild schemes of the new, though still self-styled Conservative party.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. The right hon. gentleman, in his agitation over our platform, has altogether forgotten his own. What about the All-Red Route?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I have simply to say at this moment, I have no communication to make concerning the All-Red Route.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Why did not the right hon. gentleman make it, before?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I have already stated that it is our intention to do so, though I am not in a position to make any communication at this time. But I hope to do so later in the session.

Hon. GEORGE E. FOSTER (North Toronto.) Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) has cut out a great deal more material than I supposed he would. Therefore, I find a rather hard task placed upon me—especially considering that I am labouring under the difficulty of a tremendous cold. I fear my voice will scarcely carry me through a half-hour speech and that it will be difficult for me even to touch upon all the points which the right hon. gentleman has dealt. I hope the House will be lenient towards me, as it has always been. I shall try to make myself as well heard as I can. The right hon. gentleman has covered a great deal of ground, but one thing above everything else has struck me as being very peculiar in his speech. While, in his closing words, he has admitted that there was a great deal in the speech from the Throne which he would like to touch upon, and which he intends hereafter to touch upon, yet he travelled far from that speech. He failed to perform his duty by