

Mr. McINNES. I cannot recollect.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I am told that there is no change whatever made in the original report as made to the House; and if that is the case, I am afraid it would be establishing a very dangerous precedent to allow an alteration of so important a character to be made upon the statement of any one member of the House if it were not generally concurred in; and therefore I am under the impression that it is only possible for the committee to take the report as it has come to the chairman's hands.

Mr. DAVIN. Under these circumstances, I move that the committee rise and report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. The hon. gentleman who has just made this motion is intensely anxious that the committee should rise. He has a great indisposition to dispose of this Bill. With regard to the question of the amendment in this section, I concede at once that if we were proposing to make any alteration in any feature of the Bill which was at all vital, there would be some reasonable ground for objection to its being done in the absence of any note of it in the report of the committee. But it will, I think, be admitted at once that a change of this nature, reducing the capital stock, is not such a change as need excite any great alarm on the part of the members of this committee. It is one in the direction which I think would generally be approved. I do not speak simply from hearsay. I am stating what has come under my own knowledge. I myself moved that the capital stock be reduced and the promoter of the Bill conferred with his people—I saw him talk to Mr. Bodwell, and they agreed, in my hearing, to the reduction. I said myself that two million and a half of capitalization was excessive and Mr. Bodwell agreed that the amount should be reduced, and I was impressed with the idea that the secretary of the committee had made a note of it.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Blair) mistakes my opinion on the question. I should be disposed to concur in the view expressed by the Minister of Railways, but it is a question whether in conflict with the rules of the House it be possible to change a Bill as reported from the Railway Committee. We have the Speaker of the House now to express an opinion on that question. I believe it is perfectly understood that it is not competent to make an amendment without notice.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I am not insisting that it is competent. I take it that the committee is disposed to accept the assurance that I gave that it was by an oversight that the change was omitted to be made. If there is the

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slightest objection I would suggest to leave it as it is. It is no concern to me.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I think it would establish a dangerous precedent to change the Bill as it comes from committee.

Mr. DAVIN. I do not coincide with the view of the Minister. He tells us that the Railway Committee in its wisdom decided that the capital was excessive, and that the Railway Committee decided that the capital should be reduced by more than one-half. It does not appear on the face of the Bill that the reduction was made. If the Railway Committee held that the capital was excessive it would be a monstrous thing for this House to hold that we would have the right to establish the capital at two and a half million dollars. I think myself that the best course to adopt would be to move that the committee rise, and that this Bill be referred back to the Railway Committee. I move that seconded by my hon. friend (Mr. Bergeron).

Mr. MORRISON. May I suggest that the matter stand as it is. There is no evidence before the committee sufficient to justify the impression that the capital was reduced, and why not leave the amount at two millions five hundred thousand dollars.

Mr. DAVIN. We cannot do that, because the rules of the House preclude it on the reason stated by the Minister of Railways. There is no evidence on the face of the Bill that the change was made in the Railway Committee, and that the capital should be reduced from two million five hundred thousand to one million dollars. It would be an extraordinary thing for this House not to recognize that recommendation of the Railway Committee.

Mr. CASEY. If this is the only thing objected to in the Bill it is quite open to let it go through the committee as it stands, and anybody who objects to it can, if he gives notice now, move on the third reading of the Bill that it be referred back to the Committee of the Whole to make the change suggested.

Mr. LaRIVIERE. The Bill was either amended or not amended in the Railway Committee, and if it is as is stated by the Minister of Railways, then we have not the Bill that we should consider in this House. My conviction is, from the evidence we have from the Minister of Railways, that the Bill was amended in the Railway Committee in the way suggested, and, therefore, as the Bill appears to us in this House, is not the Bill as amended in the Railway Committee, we cannot consider it.

Mr. CASEY. The fact is, I think, that this amendment was agreed to by the parties, but was probably not put from the Chair and carried in the Railway Committee. It is, however, quite competent for the House to refer this Bill back to the committee and