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CANADA'S NATIONAL TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY

Speeches with Respect to It by Rt. Honorable Sir
Wilfrid Laurier and by Hon. Clifford Sifton

Some Comparisons Between the Grand Trunk Contract and the
C. P. R. Contract—Conservative Objections Answered
By Conservatives Themselves

The Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I move for leave to introduce a bill to provide for the construction of a National Transcontinental railway. The bill which I have the honor to place in your hands is divided into two parts. The first provides for the creation of a commission to be composed of three members, and to be empowered to build a certain portion of the railway which is mentioned in the bill, the title of which I have just given. I do not know that at this moment it would serve any good purpose to go minutely into the dispositions of this part of the bill. They are such as are to be found in bills of this character, to empower the commissioners to do a certain work, and they define their powers and their obligations.

The second part of the bill provides for the ratification of a contract which has been entered into between the government and certain gentlemen now seeking incorporation under the name of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway company. This bill will have to be supplemented by resolutions, which I will place on the order paper to conform with our rules of procedure in such cases. The House has been impatient, and not unnaturally, to be in-

formed of the leading features of the policy which we have to present with regard to the building of another transcontinental railway. It will be my duty now to inform the House and to give it all the knowledge it is in my power to give at this moment, in order to satisfy a very legitimate curiosity.

The Reason for the New Enterprise.

First, sir, perhaps it would not be amiss if I were to address myself at once to a question which has come to us from different quarters, and which may find an echo within these walls. Why this new enterprise? Why this expenditure? Why should parliament be called upon to assent to such a policy as is here indicated? We ask parliament to assent to this policy because we believe—nay, we feel certain, and certain beyond a doubt—that in so doing we give voice and expression to a sentiment, a latent but deep sentiment, which is to-day in the mind, and still more in the heart, of every Canadian, that a railway to extend from the shores of the Atlantic ocean to the shores of the Pacific ocean, and to be every inch of it, on Canadian soil, is a national as well as a commercial necessity. That such a road must be built that it is, in the language which I have