

Mr. CURRIE: Does the minister intend to make a general statement to the House in regard to the railway situation, and if so, when, so that we may know if it is going to be debated or not? It has been the custom to make such a statement.

Mr. J. D. REID: It has been the custom for the Minister of Railways every year to make a statement as to the general railway situation at the time he takes up his Estimates, and it is my intention to do so when the Estimates of the Railway Department are taken up.

Mr. CAHILL: If the Estimates are not taken up very soon, we shall have a lot of new railway legislation passed. As I understood the regulations passed last year, they did not provide that the Government should wait until the arbitration was settled before taking over the management. Is the position now that the country own the stock of the Canadian Northern railway, but that until the arbitration is decided, we have nothing to say as to the management?

Mr. J. D. REID: When the stock was taken over, it was understood and arranged with the present Board of Directors that they were not to undertake any new work or enter into any negotiation other than to continue the operation of the road until the new Board of Directors had been appointed. It was expected the arbitration would have been completed long before this. In the meantime, until their finding is made nothing is being done by the Canadian Northern directors except to operate the road.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Is the Government debarred by any understanding it has with the Canadian Northern from proceeding to take over the road and appointing a board of management such as Sir Henry Drayton and his associates suggested?

Mr. J. D. REID: The Government are not debarred in any way. It was expected that the arbitration would only take about five or six weeks. As soon as the award is made the Government will take charge of the road and it will be under our absolute control.

Mr. RICHARDSON: The minister must see that even when the award has been made it may not be accepted either by the Government or by the company, and the present status might continue for weeks and months, and, perhaps, for a year. I think, under the circumstances, it would be very dangerous to have it go out to the country that the Government is going to wait before taking any action regarding the

operation of the road until the award has been finally settled.

Mr. J. D. REID: I said that as soon as the arbitrators have made their award, that is final so far as the Government is concerned. We will then take over the road.

Mr. EULER: Does this legislation contemplate the granting of additional powers, or merely the extension of powers formerly possessed by the company, but which have now lapsed?

Mr. J. D. REID: It does not add to the powers at all. The original charter of this company has not been changed at all.

Mr. EULER: This is not a road against which protests were entered by the hydro-radial people of Ontario?

Mr. J. D. REID: The Hydro-Electric Commission objected to the extension of this charter two years ago for the reason that the road, when built, would parallel a line the commission proposed to build from Toronto to Niagara Falls, but in the committee the other day the Hydro Commission did not object to the extension of this charter because this railway now belongs to the people of Canada and is subject to the control of this Parliament.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Administered by the people of Canada?

Mr. J. D. REID: It will be administered by the people of Canada from now on. Anything that is done in connection with this railway will be done by the Government, and we shall first have to ask Parliament to vote the money.

Mr. EULER: They have withdrawn their objection?

Mr. J. D. REID: Yes, because the Government has taken over the road. The same objection was taken two years ago by the city of Toronto; they felt their rights would not be as well protected by the Canadian Northern railway, which then had control over this road, as they would be when the road was under the control of this Parliament.

Mr. CURRIE: Will the minister be in a position to make a statement on the third reading of this Bill to-morrow as to whether the right-of-way is so fully occupied by the Electrical Development Company, that there is actually no room left on the right-of-way where a railway could be built? He might also inform us whether the company has purchased additional land along the