

asked if the hon. gentleman would now tell us whether it is his deliberate purpose to give this House but ten days in which to agree to a measure, upon pain of being punished by not having a holiday. The right hon. gentleman replied, that, with the assistance of the majority of this House, such was the intention of the Government.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I say so, too; but I ask the hon. gentleman if that will bear, for one moment, the forced construction that he put upon it. The First Minister did not say that this measure would not take a month to discuss, but that of course a long adjournment would be inconsistent with the policy that had induced the Government to summon Parliament at this early date.

Mr. MACKENZIE. I read his words.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. But you did not read a word that intimated that any person was to be forced for want of time—

Mr. MACKENZIE. Ten days.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The question was, if this matter was not concluded within that period, would there be a long adjournment and a long period of time lost before the subject would be again considered, and the right hon. gentleman said frankly to the House, if we are not able to conclude this matter before the Christmas holidays, there will be but a short adjournment, for the obvious reason that it is in the interest of the country this question should be dealt with promptly. In calling Parliament together at this period, there is no intention of depriving the House of the fullest opportunity of examining this question in all its details. I believe the more it is discussed the more hon. gentlemen opposite themselves, will find, if they have any regard for their own past pledges, they will be compelled to support it. That is the difficulty these hon. gentlemen will meet. So far from there being any desire not to have the fullest and frankest discussion, I trust this great measure, in all its details, will continue to be the subject of exhaustive discussion, and the more it is discussed, the more the Government will gain in the general opinion of the House and country. The measure is here. It is the only measure we are in a position to lay before the House, and say there is a proposal to construct the Canadian Pacific Railway emanating from parties who afford a satisfactory guarantee of their ability to carry out the contract. I believe it would be acting most unfairly to gentlemen who have been zealously engaged in endeavoring to make arrangements by which they could grapple with the great work, and whose negotiations were fruitless, to have their names bandied about here and discussed one way or the other. I have no objection to the motion of the hon. member for Lambton being placed in your hands, because it is a motion on which every hon. gentleman in this House who wishes to see public business conducted upon those fair principles that will enable Governments to discuss matters with gentlemen without making the gentlemen interested in the question under debate the victims, subsequently, of that discussion, will wish to record his opinion. I trust the motion will be met, as such a motion requires to be met. We have laid everything upon the Table necessary to place every detail connected with this question in the possession of the House, and are prepared for its fullest discussion.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Will you vote for it?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The hon. member for Lambton quoted what I said. I think that he did not read the full reply. I said: "Emigrants will be here in May, and it is of very great importance, if Parliament is going to adopt the arrangement, that it should do so with all convenient speed. We consider it of so much importance that we shall ask the House to take it into early and earnest consideration; and to remain here with as short a Christmas interval as possible until it is passed."

Mr. BLAKE. I shall not complicate this discussion by questioning the policy of the Government as to the time at which they propose to commence, and the diligence with which they propose to prosecute the discussion of the great question they are about to submit for our consideration. All we are at present engaged in considering is, what is the nature of the materials essential to a just consideration of the subject. The proposition advanced by the Government is wholly unprecedented. It would render the conduct of public business by Ministers of a free country, more like the conduct of public business by a despot in a despotic country than anything else. It is not the magnitude of the contract that makes any difference in the attitude of a contractor towards the public; it is not the importance of the transaction that entitles those who propose to enter into it to any different consideration from ordinary contractors. There is no different motive that animates men who come forward and make tenders for one public work, as compared with those who tender for another public work, that would entitle them to have their proposals received in confidence, as the Minister implied, though he did not dare say so in express terms, they were—because to receive such proposals in confidence would be a gross breach of duty. He said they were received without prejudice. He borrowed a legal phrase wholly without application to this occasion. A man makes an offer; he knows when he makes that offer that he submits it to the possibility of acceptance or rejection; he knows, also, that if he fails to meet his offer to the Government, his offer will be disclosed. What is this we hear of?—humiliation! Every day men are tendering for public works and are awarded contracts on condition of being able to carry them out. One condition is that they give security; every day they fail to give security. Sometimes a supporter of hon. gentlemen opposite buys off the security of a contractor, and the next contractor gets the work; but I do not hear that the contractors who fail are entitled to have their names withheld, or that they are not to be exposed to the humiliation of its being known that they have failed to carry out their propositions. Public business could not safely go on if Ministers were to be permitted to arrogate this power to themselves—of deciding that they would conceal from the House and the country offers made to them of one description, and bring down only one offer. The hon. gentleman was out of order when he undertook to characterise papers which he refused to bring down. At the same time, he tells us that the offers he refuses to bring down were not rejected, but that the men who made them found themselves unable to carry them out—that the difficulty arose, not from their offers being too favorable to themselves, but from their being unable to implement them, assuming, therefore, that if they had been implemented they would have been accepted by the Administration. In the debate upon my resolution last Session, the Minister of Railways gave us some details of the form of the road, but he stated that an offer was made for the construction of the road from Selkirk to Kamloops for \$13,000 and 13,000 acres a mile.

Mr. CASEY. \$10,000 a mile.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. No, I think, if I remember right, it was thirteen millions of money and twenty-six millions of acres—

Mr. BLAKE. Well, Sir, this only shows how important it is that we should have the papers. The hon. Minister himself does not remember whether it was \$13,000,000 and 26,000,000 acres.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Oh yes.

Mr. BLAKE. Well, he did not know a moment ago.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. See what the *Hansard* says.

Mr. BLAKE. I don't care what the *Hansard* says. I am speaking of the hon. gentleman's memory. Why should