

Bill, it might make the advances. The arbitration then goes on, and it could be provided that, unless, at the session of Parliament succeeding the award, Parliament did not approve of it, and did not authorize the Government to take the property over under the award, then all the stock would be returned to the parties entitled to it and any money which the Government might advance with interest would form a statutory lien upon the property of the Canadian Northern railway. The Government could provide that the cost to which Mackenzie and Mann and their associates had been put in connection with the matter might be paid by the Government. If it is decided to send it back to the committee for the purpose of making the change as specified in my amendment, it could be worked out so as to do no injustice to the Canadian Northern interest, but it should also leave Parliament and the people of this country free to act upon the award and free, if deemed in the public interest, to acquire the property in that way. I submit this amendment with all confidence, believing that it will commend itself to every one who is desirous of seeing the Canadian Northern taken over and made a government-owned system, and at the same time of doing what is fair towards the people of this country. We ought not to forget that it is not our money that is to be paid for this property. We are sitting here merely as trustees for the people of Canada, and we ought to give the people every reasonable opportunity of knowing what they will be called upon to pay for the property which, it is alleged, it is in the interests of the country to purchase. That opportunity will be afforded to the people if the amendment which I propose is carried into effect, and there will be no delay that will be injurious. The Government can assist the road, if it wants to, in the meantime, just in the same way as if they had taken the property over; and after the valuation placed upon the property by the arbitrator is known, if the people, with their eyes open, and Parliament acting for the people with its eyes open, decide it is not in the interest of the country to pay the award, then no one can complain. But to-day, if the Bill passes unamended, without a provision such as I have asked the House to adopt, the country without being consulted, without the question having been submitted to them, without the electors at large having had an opportunity to pass judgment at all, will be committed

[Mr. Pugsley.]

to a transaction which, as has been stated already, will run into an enormous sum of money. I think that will be most unjust and most unfair to the public. By adopting this amendment which I suggest, no injustice will be done to anybody; the course taken will be fair to the people of Canada, who will have to foot the bill and upon whom great responsibility in connection with the purchase of this system will rest.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Mr. Speaker, the member for St. John (Mr. Pugsley) labours under a great many misapprehensions about the measure now under consideration. Among other things, he is suffering from a very serious misapprehension as to the length of time during which the Bill has been before Parliament. On the first day of August, just four weeks ago to-day, notice was given of the resolution upon which this Bill was founded, and considerable discussion took place. The Bill has on many occasions since that time been under consideration, and my hon. friend will admit that whatever may be said about other members of the House, there has not been any lack of opportunity on his part to discuss the Bill very thoroughly and on all occasions. He very suavely informs us that there was never any intention on the part of hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House to obstruct the measure. I think he is in a position to speak in that respect for a good many hon. members on the other side, but not for himself. My hon. friend seems to be under another extraordinary misapprehension. He observes that this Bill ought to have been introduced before the recess which began early in February and continued, I think, until April 19. Does the hon. gentleman know that during that period the Commission which had been appointed to investigate the whole railway situation was continuing its deliberations, and that the report of that Commission was not presented to the Government, until sometime in April? The astonishing suggestion of my hon. friend is that, while a number of eminent gentlemen who had been appointed by the Government to make this investigation were still continuing their inquiries, the Government should have come before Parliament and introduced this Bill.

My hon. friend makes reference to various supposed occurrences of an unfortunate character, in his estimation, which will take place if an arbitration is proceeded with. May I call his attention to the fact that he evidently overlooked those possibili-