

operation was carried on by the contractor. Furthermore, I think the House knows very well that, in connection with the right to charge operating expenses to capital account, there was a very special reason for a great delay on the part of the officials of the Grand Trunk Pacific in making the necessary application to the Railway Board, although the lines had been completed. To such an extent was this the case that the question was considered as to whether or not Parliament should take to itself power to declare the lines open and ready for operation although the companies themselves had not done so.

Now, I desire, in the plainest possible terms, to take issue both with the Prime Minister and with the member for Pictou as to who is responsible for the overbuilding of railways in this country, and who is responsible for this mess. Did any gentleman in this House, Mr. Speaker, ever hear the suggestion, until made by the Prime Minister in this debate, that it was open to this country to cancel all the charters that had been given and to set aside all the bond issues that had been made? Not only were these bond issues made, but the moneys had been provided and were in the hands of the trustees of the issues; and these moneys could be applied only to the one purpose. The fact is, as is very well known, that the great part of these undertakings had been completed at that time, that the right of way had been bought throughout, that a large proportion of the steel had been laid, and that the companies and the Government that had endorsed their bonds were absolutely committed to the undertakings and had to go on with them. I say that every charter, which is responsible for the overbuilding of lines in Canada, where that overbuilding to-day is burdensome upon the public, was authorized by the Liberal Government. Why, during the whole long term of the Liberal administration, during fifteen years, there were only two years in which there was not some Canadian Northern legislation giving charters or guarantee charters, guarantees, and the like. My hon. friends will find a great number of them, and they will further find only two years when none was granted. I do not want to weary the House by giving a list of all these, but I should like to specify some of the main charters,—charters which have resulted in unnecessary mileage, and consequent financial embarrassment.

Hon. gentlemen know that the invasion of Ontario by the Canadian Northern has
[Sir Henry Drayton.]

proved very, very expensive, and is now demonstrated to have been for the most part entirely unnecessary. The charter for the line from Montreal to French River was granted on July 20th, 1905, but if you count the railway as in operation you will find that in 1911, according to the Prime Minister, we became liable for it. For the line from the township of Chisholm to Capreol, their divisional point in Ontario, the charter was granted on the 19th May, 1909. For the line from North Bay to Port Arthur, linking up the system with the West, and committing the country absolutely to the project, the charter was granted on the 15th May, 1902. When you get out farther west you will find that the charters for the lines from Dauphin to Battleford and thence to Edmonton were granted on the 29th June, 1897, and the 15th May, 1902, respectively. There is no doubt of one thing, Sir, and that is that, generally speaking the prairie lines of the Canadian Northern are good lines. If the Canadian Northern had been left where the Laurier administration found it, on the prairies, and allowed to expand there, and had devoted the hundreds of millions of dollars which were sunk in the building of unnecessary lines in the East towards giving absolutely necessary lines to the western farmers, its prairie system would indeed have been a great asset to this country. I repeat, those lines were good and necessary lines.

But the Canadian Northern system was not to stop there; that bold administration was determined to continue extension to the Coast, and it granted a charter for the line from Edmonton to Vancouver on the 11th August, 1899.

Mr. GRAHAM: Might I ask the hon. gentleman a question? Is it not a fact that the line from the Rockies to Vancouver, known as the Canadian Northern railway, was built under a provincial charter granted by the Government of Sir Richard McBride?

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I will deal with that in a moment.

Mr. GRAHAM: Why not now?

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: We will get to it in proper order. Why this anxiety?

Mr. GRAHAM: There was never a line built under that charter.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I am pointing out that so far as the corporate administration was concerned, these rights