

tinct motion, that leave be given to take up the second reading of this Bill, and that motion was unanimously carried. Then the question of the second reading was put by me and carried, and the Bill was referred to the Railway Committee, so that the procedure was most carefully gone through. I must say that I can see no irregularity in it. Of course, if hon. members interested were not here to object, it cannot be helped. But the motion the hon. gentleman has moved now is, I suppose, the only way out of the difficulty.

The **PRIME MINISTER** (Sir Wilfrid Laurier). If my hon. friend were to allege, as I do not understand that he did, that a substantial injustice had been done to somebody, or to some parties interested in this Bill, there could be no objection at all to his motion. I remember distinctly the facts as they were stated a moment ago. When this Bill was called, it had been the intention to have it referred to the Committee on Railways, Canals and Telegraph Lines; but after a conference, I think, by both sides of the House, it was agreed to let it stand. I was approached afterwards by the Minister of Railways and Canals, who represented to me that unless this Bill was sent immediately to the Committee on Railways it might lose an opportunity of being considered during the present session. My view was that as it was a private Bill, perhaps the parties interested might be taken by surprise if it were now referred to the Committee on Railways. But as I understood, at least that was the impression that was conveyed to me at the time, that the parties interested were agreeable to have the Bill sent up to the Committee on Railways so that they might there have an opportunity of discussing the conflicting interests involved in it. Unless, therefore, some interests may suffer, I would suggest to my hon. friend whether it would be advisable to take the proceeding which he now asks us to take. The Bill would come up again, necessarily, this evening at eight o'clock, and might be taken up and referred again to the Committee on Railways. I would ask him whether it would serve any purpose to persist in this motion, although I have no objection, so far as I am concerned.

**Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.** I would not like to press this motion upon a mere technicality. But in answer to the right hon. gentleman, I may say that while I am not fully conversant with the facts in the case, one of the counsel in the case who is resident in this city, and was engaged in the discussion of the question before the Privy Council in England touching the Great North-west Central Railway Company, informs me that he was very anxious that certain facts should be put before the House before this Bill was referred to the committee. His statement briefly was this:

**Mr. SPEAKER.**

That much of this legislation is in connection with a litigation which has reached the Privy Council in England; that although a judgment of the Privy Council suggesting legislation has been given, this legislation has sprung up very quickly, before even the reasons for the judgment have been framed, although the mere outlines of the judgment have been given so that a formal judgment could be drawn up—such is my information. Under these circumstances it was premature, and might prejudice the interests of the parties for Parliament to deal with legislation that has become necessary on account of a judgment of the Privy Council before that judgment can be understood and fully discussed—those were the statements. The observation was also made to me that the Bill was introduced to the Senate only a few days ago, that it came from that House to this in the dying hours of this session, and not only was this procedure adopted yesterday, but a notice was actually posted in this House for the Railway Committee before the Bill had been read, the rules requiring a notice to be posted a certain time. Therefore, there is a danger in this extreme haste to the interests of the parties, and there were many, there were several counsel interested before the Privy Council representing various parties, creditors, sub-contractors and others. The danger is, therefore, that if this Bill is proceeded with so hastily, the Railway Committee may have charge of it before these parties are able to be heard. The gentlemen who spoke to me about this, desired that before the Bill was referred to the committee, the question should be discussed as to whether the Bill should be read the second time.

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS** (Mr. Blair). I think, perhaps, I am more directly responsible for the procedure which has taken place in connection with this Bill than any other member of the House, and I did so after a good deal of consideration—in other words, I took the course I did after a good deal of consideration. But I may say, without knowing that the hon. member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper) was desirous of opposing the Bill taking its second reading, that I was aware from day to day that the Bill was standing over at the request of the Premier, and I spoke to him on the subject, pointing out what seemed to me to be rather an objection to our refusing to allow the Bill to go to a second reading. I have been advised from various sources, and by various members of the House, that they had strong objections to the Bill passing, and I felt myself that it was one to which very strong objection could be taken.

Seeing that this had been dealt with by a committee in the other Chamber and been very considerably amended, I thought it should be considered by the Railway Com-