

of this document was concealed from the House. The right hon. gentleman, in answer to the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) said, after repeated questions, that every document had been brought down. He went on to say, 'without any equivocation at all,' that every paper had been produced, and he said that knowing at the time that the government was in possession of and keeping back a document of the utmost importance to the public interest in relation to the matter we were then discussing. That document was an application on behalf of the Grand Trunk Pacific, setting forth proposals for the construction of a large portion of the Transcontinental Railway, stating the terms and conditions on which it would build the proposed railway, stating them with almost as much exactness and particularity as you would find in an Act of parliament, and going on then to ask for aid from the government in the construction of the work.

One has only to read the terms of the proposition to see how exceedingly important the production of that paper was, how wrong it was to keep it back, and what bearing it would have had upon the discussion that went on for weeks last year and again for weeks during the present session. The document was dated as far back as November, 1902. The other day it was referred to almost as if it was a private letter addressed by two or three gentlemen to the right hon. Prime Minister personally. I propose to read two or three clauses to show how far such a description was from the fact. It begins:

Your petitioners desire to memorialize your government in regard to the construction of a first-class line of railway from the northern terminus of the Grand Trunk Railway, at, or near, North Bay, Ont., through to the Pacific coast.

That is the opening clause. It goes on:

It is considered very desirable in the public interest—

There are emphatic words showing the public nature of the document.

—that there should be, without any unnecessary delay, a second transcontinental railway reaching from the Atlantic ocean to the Pacific ocean, in order that additional facilities may be provided for the large growing business of the Northwest—

And here are some very significant words, having regard to the discussion of last year and this year:

—which might otherwise find its outlet through American channels.

Why, Sir, that was the subject that was discussed and debated on both sides of this House for weeks, the question whether traffic might be diverted from Canadian to American channels; and that, Sir, these petitioners, pointed out as a danger that they proposed to guard this country against.

Mr. BARKER.

And yet we were discussing this matter time and time again, week after week, without having the benefit of putting this testimony, from the very mouths of these gentlemen, before the House. Then, it goes on:

2nd. That your petitioners propose, as soon as authorized by your government, to undertake the construction of such a line from North Bay, Ont. (or some other point north thereof, to be defined), to the Pacific coast, the terminus to be at or near Port Simpson, with all necessary branches along the route, to be designated.

Then comes clause 3, another significant one:

3rd. That your petitioners, therefore, ask that their application for authority to construct such a line of railway, to be called the 'Grand Trunk Pacific Railway' shall be granted.

This in a 'private,' 'confidential,' 'personal' document. Did not these gentlemen who signed this petition, Mr. Hays, railway manager, Mr. Cox, president, I think, of several railway companies in his time, and Mr. Wainwright, an officer of a railway company who, for a quarter of a century, has been doing business before this House in relation to charters, know to whom they were really applying for authority to construct a line of railway. Did these gentlemen imagine, in their innocence, that the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) could authorize the construction of the railway? Did these gentlemen suppose that the government, with all the power they assume to themselves, could authorize the construction of a railway? No, Sir; the only body that could authorize the construction of the railway was this parliament. And, with that clause in their petition, they intended that petition to be not merely for the government but for parliament, the only body that could grant their prayer. I will read a couple of other clauses that would have been of vast importance to gentlemen on this side of the House in their discussions and also, I think, to the people. One of them is as follows:—

8th. That in order to provide for connection with the Atlantic sea-board all the year round and through an all-British territory route, your petitioners will be prepared to enter into an arrangement with the government for an interchange of traffic, or other satisfactory agreement, with the Intercolonial Railway at Montreal, or to consider such other proposal as the government may submit.

Let me read with that an even more significant clause. I call the attention of the House to the fact that this application is on behalf of the Grand Trunk Pacific and not in behalf of the Grand Trunk:

9th. That your petitioners would have the advantage of all the eastern connections, in Ontario and Quebec, of the Grand Trunk Railway, and by this means on the completion of the transcontinental line there would be estab-