

The Committee resumed at Three o'clock.

Mr. GRAHAM: I remember that when we were engaged in the discussion of the Navy Bill in this House we were accused time and again of voting for the grant for the construction of three battleships to be added to the British navy because we did not object strenuously to the first clause in committee and the restrictions surrounding the grant. We were all in favour of spending the money that is, this side generally were in favour of spending it in one way and the Government in another way. The most important point of the whole resolution is in the first clause, and that is one of the reasons why I am very strong in expressing my view against it. The Government cannot say that allowing this clause to go through, and attempting to remedy the details, are equivalent to our voting for the grant to this company. The principle of the guarantee has been pretty well discussed in the House. I think that I have expressed my views as strongly and forcibly as I could. I take the ground that the Government, being about to put up the money and become a partner, should have a controlling interest. I do not know that I would go so far as to say that they ought to continue to hold that control forever but they should for a time at any rate, or until the road is constructed and the money expended. I want to make another point clear. I see that the press has represented my position as being different from what it actually is. I never said that Mackenzie and Mann had never put a dollar into that project. I do not think I made that statement. I was arguing that at this particular juncture, whether their wealth was great or small, they ought to get in behind the project. The circumstances being special, and these men being doubly interested, they ought therefore to join forces with the Government. I shall have to vote against this first clause in order to make my position on the question perfectly clear.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Will the hon. gentleman say whether he is in favour of our controlling only the construction or controlling construction and operation pending completion of the road?

Mr. GRAHAM: I think I would control everything in connection with the road till it is completed. It might, and probably would be, wisdom for the present men, under the control of the Government, to

[Mr. Pardee.]

keep their eye on everything and continue the construction and operation, but I think the Government should have the authority and control.

Mr. MEIGHEN: We should control it during construction?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: And control the operation too?

Mr. GRAHAM: I would control everything because construction and operation might become so mixed up before the road is completed that while you might have control ostensibly of construction, if you did not have it over operation, you might not have it at all. A report emanated from somewhere and got into the press that 15 per cent of the stock was being placed in the hands of trustees in order to enable the Government to retain control of the road. Only three or four days ago, the Ottawa Journal or one of the Conservative papers, came out in defence of the proposition on the very ground that 15 per cent was going to be placed in such a position that the Government could keep control by getting possession of the fifteen per cent. That was the whole argument which was advanced by the Conservative press in favor of this proposition. There are some good editors upon the Government staff who edit these reports, but they grow too enthusiastic in sending them out. The Solicitor General will remember that in connection with the National Transcontinental question there was a typewritten report, sent out to the papers. Where it came from I am not prepared to say, but when the official report was put on the table there was a copy of this advance sheet sent to the press placed on my desk as being explanatory of what was in the report itself. Some of the departments apparently have editors who are too efficient; they think they know all about these things, and the press takes them as being authoritative. Having some experience on both sides of this subject, I know whereof I speak. I have had a good deal of experience in the newspaper business. I know that when a typewritten document is sent to the press gallery it is taken as being more or less official because it would not be typewritten and sent out unless somebody had taken the trouble to prepare and issue that report. The Conservative press for weeks had defended this guarantee