

that statement. He made a statement that he must have known to be without foundation and for the purpose of taking for the moment a political advantage of my hon. friend the senior member for Halifax (Mr. Jones).

Mr. JONES (Halifax). He made the statement in the House afterwards.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). The hon. gentleman says that Sir Charles Tupper made that statement in the House afterwards, and I believe that statement was in some form or other repeated by the hon. the Minister of Public Works. This may be a reason for condemning that hon. gentleman. It may be a reason for the House censuring the conduct of that hon. gentleman as a member of the Government, and a reason for the Government keeping silent when that statement was made and undertaking to mislead the House. I do not see that is any reason for saddling the people of this country with an additional debt for the construction of 120 miles of railway that may be of no real commercial advantage to the people of this country. When the Government comes down to this House and say that they have now made an arrangement with the Canadian Pacific Railway for the purpose of giving effect to that promise, which had at the time it was made no foundation in fact, I hold that we are entitled to know what that arrangement is. Surely if there is an arrangement the right hon. gentleman knows what it is. Does he propose that this sort of thing shall be done piecemeal and that we are going to carry this Bill there, and then that we are going to take another step, letting one matter after another slip from the control of the House? The right hon. gentleman ought to be frank with the House. If he has entered into an engagement of this sort he has entered into an engagement not on his own behalf, but on behalf of the people of this country whose interests the members of this House are here to protect. The hon. gentleman is not in form, whatever he may be in fact, the master of the House, he is the chief of the Committee who are supposed to represent the House and speak on behalf of the House for these administrative Acts. The House would be wanting in its duty to those whom it represents, if it permitted a single step to be taken in this matter until we know precisely what the engagements are between the Government and the Canadian Pacific Railway. The hon. gentleman is not dealing with his own money in this. We have burden after burden imposed upon the people of this country for the past ten years and these burdens have been increased to an enormous extent. The people of this country are embarrassed financially, and embarrassed in every way. The farmers of this country are not to-day worth by 25 per cent. as much as they were ten years ago in consequence of the depreciation of their property on account of these unprofitable burdens that have been imposed upon them. We know what the policy was in dealing with the old Grand Trunk Railway Company twenty or thirty years ago. It was that every time that company became embarrassed, they came to the House to ask for legislation to give it relief and then the opportunity was seized to impose some profitless enterprise upon the company and to impede its chances of further advancement in the future. Is the Canadian Pacific Railway to be dealt with in exactly the same way? Are the Government of this country, acting not on behalf of the people of this country on the whole, but acting on behalf of those in one town who are seeking to build up their interest at the expense of another, to undertake to impose on this railway company burdens that will increase its embarrassments in the future, and which will impose still further burdens upon the overburdened people of this country? The policy which the hon. gentleman is again initiating is the policy which embarrassed the Grand Trunk Railway Company and which deprived every man and woman who took any stock in that road, of every dollar of profit on what they

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell).

had invested. There is not a stockholder in the original Grand Trunk enterprise who ever received either in interest or in any other form a dollar out of that company; they have lost every copper they invested. So the hon. gentleman proposes to initiate this same system with regard to the Canadian Pacific Railway. I say it is time in the history of this country that such financial proceedings should have an end, and those who are representatives of the people in this House, will be wanting in their duty to those whom they represent if they permit anything to be done until they know what the engagement of the Government is, and until they can assume the responsibility of honestly carrying out their duty to their best judgment, and pronounce on the merits of the agreement that has been entered into between the company and the Government.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I cannot see any necessity for the hon. gentleman treating us to a lecture on constitutional law on this private Bill. It appears that the hon. gentleman has got mixed up on two subjects. Here is a private Bill in which the Canadian Pacific Railway ask for leave to consolidate the encumbrance on their branch lines; to consolidate their debt in fact. They ask for leave to issue certain securities, to raise certain sums of money on their property. That is the proposition. That is either right or wrong. If it is right, the House should pass it; if it is wrong, they should not do so. The hon. gentleman said himself that he saw no objection to the Bill; it was passed by a large majority in the Railway Committee, and I have no doubt the same reasons which induced the Railway Committee to report the Bill will induce the majority of this House to grant this reasonable measure. It has no connection at all with the completion of the Short Line Railway. Then, the only reason I made the statement I did to the hon. gentleman opposite was to prevent a long and weary discussion on that motion of his; and he very naturally, with the other members from the Maritime Provinces, feels specially interested in having the Short Line Railway built, and in having construction begun on that portion from Harvey to Salisbury. Well, an arrangement has been made, and it is impossible to discuss that to-night, and it is equally wrong to stop this private Bill, which has nothing to do with that question.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Why has this Bill been delayed for a fortnight, if it has nothing to do with it?

Mr. LISTER. The House is in favor of this Bill, but you want a secret agreement.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. It is not a secret agreement. If the House approves of the arrangement, they will vote for it; if not, they will throw it out; but whether that arrangement meets with rejection or acceptance at the hands of the House, this Bill ought to pass. The passing of this Bill is of very great importance to the company. If it should be adopted by Parliament, that should be known at once in order that the company may make the necessary financial arrangements. Its passage will be announced by cable, and the financial arrangements can then be made. It is of great interest to all parts of the country where the money will be expended. Afterwards, if the House does not approve of the arrangements made to finish the Short Line Railway from Harvey to Salisbury, that measure can be voted down, but the two things ought not to be mixed together.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). You have mixed them in the past three weeks.

Mr. LISTER. They are inseparable.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. They are in no way inseparable, and I think the House will agree that they should not be mixed together.