

not understand and appreciate the point. My right hon. friend says further that this document was properly withheld from parliament because the proposal was not entertained. Well, let us see whether or not the proposal was entertained in whole or in part, and I shall not offer any apology for reading at this stage the whole of this interesting document in order that we may see what the proposal was and whether or not it did form the basis of that measure which has so recently been discussed in this House :

Confidential.

Montreal, Que., Nov. 3rd, 1902.

To the Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, G.C.M.G.,  
P.C., Premier of the Dominion of Can.,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Sir,—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, for the reasons and upon the conditions herein set forth.

Let me point out to the right hon. gentleman who says that this proposal has not been entertained, that this is part of the very railway project which we have been discussing during the past two sessions, and that the gentlemen who signed this communication are the promoters of the very company, the charter for which has been passed through this House. Therefore, let me say that this proposal, far from not being entertained, has been entertained to that extent, although something else has been added to it. Then the claimants proceed.

1st. That it is considered very desirable and in the public interests that there should be, without any unnecessary delay, a second trans-continental railway reaching from the Atlantic ocean to the Pacific ocean, in order that additional facilities may be provided for the large growing business in the North-west, which might otherwise find its outlet through American channels.

The same idea and almost the very words in which the right hon. gentleman last year introduced the very measure which we have been discussing in parliament during the past and present sessions. Yet the right hon. gentleman says that no portion of this proposal has been at any time entertained. There is the very proposal he has been putting through parliament and there is the very reason offered in support of it which he has urged upon the House. Yet he says this document was justly withheld from parliament for a year and a half because it was not entertained in any sense or in any part. The document proceeds as follows :

2nd. That your petitioners propose, as soon as authorized by your government, to undertake the construction of such a line from North Bay, Ontario, 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.

So far as the western division is concerned, with the exception of the line from North Bay to Winnipeg, this is exactly the proposition, with the same terminus, which was brought down by the government and discussed in parliament during last session and this. Yet the right hon. gentleman ventures to say, in the face of that, though the document has been in possession of the government during all this time, that this proposal did not relate in any way to the project we have been considering in parliament for so long a period. The document proceeds :

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

Well, now, my right hon. friend is in rather a curious position as to that. He says this is a confidential document. Then, what warrant had he to disclose it to his colleagues? If he had warrant to disclose it to his colleagues, he certainly had warrant under paragraph 3 to disclose it to parliament, for the simple and sufficient reason that parliament was the only body that could give the power asked for in this paragraph :

4th. That your petitioners will be prepared, immediately an agreement is entered into by the government, and the concessions herein-after mentioned are sanctioned by an Order in Council, to place a corps of engineers in the field, both at the eastern and western ends and at other points on the projected line.

I would like to know, if it was not under the proposal contained in that fourth paragraph, then, how was it, that engineers were put upon certain portions of that proposed line before the Bill of last session became law on the 24th of October? We find the very scheme carried out that is set forth in that fourth paragraph? They did not wait for the passing of the Bill to place the surveyors and engineers on the proposed line. They did as they had proposed to the government. The document proceeds :

5th. That the routes to be selected shall be submitted to and approved by the government, after proper surveys have been made.

Again we have the very scheme that has been discussed and considered in parliament during these last two sessions :

6th. That as soon as the plans and routes are approved, work shall be commenced and the road shall be completed and in operation within a period of five years from the time the Act is in force.

The very terms of the contract which was brought down by the government last year. And when my right hon. friend tells us that this document would have been of no assistance to parliament in considering