

think this is the proper time to look into this matter and if this company is going to be subsidized to such a large extent by the government for the whole route, the company should be compelled to pass through that portion of country where the route would be shortest and the easiest to build.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. If I may be allowed to repeat an observation which I made when this Bill was before the committee, I would say that I do not see the wisdom of discussing the question of government aid in connection with this charter. For myself I have declined to discuss the two things together, and I do not admit for a moment that in passing this charter in its present form, if we do pass it, the government are committed to anything whatever. If the government decide to grant aid to the Grand Trunk Pacific, then, when the measure concerning that aid comes down, this charter must be adapted to the government aid. Therefore, I fail to see the wisdom of connecting the two subjects. In supporting this charter in its general character, I do not thereby commit myself to anything in the world, either regarding its location or anything else which has any relation to government aid. The two questions, to my mind at all events, are absolutely separate.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Will the hon. gentleman permit me one word? In what way would the hon. gentleman adapt the charter to the altered conditions? Would he do it by amending the charter?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. Certainly, if this charter does not conform to the conditions which the government require, then this charter must either be amended or dropped. Before the government will agree to grant aid the government must insist upon the charter conforming to the conditions which they lay down.

Mr. McCREARY. Does the Finance Minister mean to say that if we agree to guarantee the bonds of this road, by a subsequent Bill we would have power to reduce the bonding powers contained in its present charter?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I take it that if this charter had at that time become law we would have to amend it. But I take it that this charter would not become law until the close of the session, and it will stand open like every other matter which has not passed its final stage. If the policy of the government should not be in harmony with the route, or with the bonding privilege, or anything else, then it is not the policy of the government that must change, but it is the charter that must change.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Then would it not be more convenient to let the Bill stand until the policy of the government is an-

Mr. TALBOT.

nounced? According to the hon. gentleman's own statement that would be the logical course.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. To my mind that is entirely a question for the promoter of the Bill. We are not urging the Bill.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). But the Bill is being urged on, and the House has to deal with it; and the question is whether the House should deal with it, having first obtained such information from the government as we are reasonably entitled to, having regard to the importance of this undertaking and its effect upon the general scheme of railway transportation in Canada. My hon. friend the Minister of Finance says that if government aid is proposed, then all these provisions may be amended. But would it not be a more convenient course to put the House in possession of such information as, according to the hon. gentleman's statement we may reasonably expect, and then at a later date in the session we could deal with the Bill, having obtained that information, and being enabled to deal with it from all possible standpoints?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. My answer is that I think we have to deal with this Bill in the same manner as any other railway charter, utterly irrespective of the question of subsidy or aid. Other companies come here for charters, we do not insist upon discussing the question of subsidy in connection with their charters. We give them the charter upon the ordinary terms of other charters, and leave the question of aid to be settled later on. I am willing to treat this company in precisely the same way as other companies. Let them take their charter for what it is worth. When we come to deal with subsidies, that is another matter.

Mr. McCARTHY. Having the Bill in charge, I must say to the committee what is common knowledge to every one: we discussed this charter for nine days in the Railway Committee, most fully and completely. All the questions which have been spoken of here to-day were before that committee and we discussed them at length. I think I am safe in saying that this Bill was more fully considered before that committee than any other Bill during the past fifteen years. Now we are in Committee of the Whole. I have no desire to stop the discussion, the Bill can be discussed as fully as possible, but I must ask the committee to permit it to go through, remodelling the Bill as the committee may see fit. We are now on section 4 of the Bill, and it is not fair, except for the purpose of argument, to couple this section with the question of bonds, and ask for an answer now. This section capitalizes the company at \$75,000,000. I submit to the committee that this is a fair and