

voting down this amendment, all they have to do is to give the assurance to this House that they will undertake to carry it out as a Government measure; and if they do neither one or the other, the House will know on whose shoulders the responsibility rests, and how much the plighted pledge of public men, in Parliament and out of it, can be relied upon. When the people find that a member of this House, occupying such a high position as the late Minister of Finance occupies in this country, and the Minister of Public Works, who holds such a high position, made deliberate statements with respect to this matter—the Minister of Public Works stating that he would take care that not a cent of money would be expended unless the whole line was completed, and that he was commissioned to speak for the Government,—I say, in the face of such strong assurances, made by such members of the Cabinet as the late Finance Minister and the present Minister of Public Works, it would be a shock to the public sentiment of this country if the people found these hon. gentlemen going back on the statements they made to this House. I trust the Government will deal with this matter, either by insisting on this clause being introduced into the Bill, or by adopting the alternative I have suggested of carrying the work out as a Government work.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I do not know that it is necessary to discuss this matter or enter into it or consider the very strong language used by the senior member for Halifax (Mr. Jones); but I can relieve his anxiety. I can tell him now that the Government have come to an arrangement with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, by which the Government will see that the road from Harvey to Salisbury is built and thereby the promises made by Sir Charles Tupper and the Minister of Public Works will be carried out.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). At what time? The hon. gentleman opposite says they have come to an arrangement by which this road will be built.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. With all convenient speed.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). I think the Government are bound to state, under these circumstances, whether they are going to build the road in one or two years. I do not wish to press them to build it within a short time; but, in view of the great interest excited, the Government should give some assurance that they will see the work undertaken at an early day.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. At an early day.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). We shall have to let it rest there at present.

Mr. LAURIER. This statement of the First Minister is hardly satisfactory in view of the pledge which it gives, and the House is entitled to particulars. The time is now up for Private Bills, and we may expect on Monday that the hon. gentleman will be prepared to make a fuller statement than he has now made.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I hope the hon. gentleman will allow this Bill to pass, for if it is going to pass at all it should pass now. The Government is coming down during the Session with the whole arrangement that has been made with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and they will ask the sanction of Parliament to it, and I have no doubt that the House will give that sanction. I have no doubt that it will be satisfactory to those most immediately concerned, that is to the hon. gentlemen representing the Maritime Provinces.

Mr. JONES (Halifax). As has been suggested by the leader of the Government, under those circumstances we

might allow the Bill to go through Committee to-night, and reserve the third reading.

An hon. MEMBER. No reserve; it is a Private Bill.

Mr. LAURIER. There is a part of this question which is a very important one and upon which I would not feel disposed to yield without more information than we have at this moment. My hon. friend (Mr. Edgar) brought forward a most important question with regard to the position of the country in connection with this Bill and upon which question no answer whatever has been given by the Government.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We could not well understand the aim of my hon. friend opposite (Mr. Edgar) in making that speech. The only claim that the Government have got against the Canadian Pacific Railway is for the guarantee of the interest on the \$15,000,000, and there are specific securities taken under the Act which gives us the land securities and which remain intact. These securities, as Parliament was convinced last Session, are more than sufficient in every way to prevent the possibility of a loss, or of the Government being called upon to pay any of that guarantee. That is the only claim against the Canadian Pacific Railway that I am aware of. The interest which we pay on the stock, as the hon. gentleman knows, is paid out of money in our own hands, and there are no other obligations that I am aware of. That being the case, the fact that the incumbrances on the different branches and leased lines is to be charged on the whole system does in no way that we are aware of or that we can discover, affect the position of the Government.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). It does seem to me that the announcement made by the First Minister shows the impropriety of our proceeding until we know exactly what the arrangement is between the Government and the Canadian Pacific Railway. This is not a matter of private arrangement between the Government and the country. It is an arrangement that affects the public revenues and in which the entire population of this country are interested, and, therefore, while this Bill is before the Committee and under its consideration, we are, in consequence of the announcement which the First Minister has made, entitled to know what the arrangement is that has been come to—an arrangement which, from the statement of the right hon. gentleman himself, will impose further burthens upon the people of this country. I saw no objection myself to the passage of the Bill as it stood, with some amendments. It seems to me that a company having large material interests, coming before this House and asking to be granted a charter so as to improve its financial position without detriment to the public, ought to be enabled to do so, and as no credit or security on the part of the public is required, it is none of our business; it is their business, and they ought to be permitted to judge of their own interests. But, Sir, I was rather astonished at the position taken by my hon. friend from Halifax (Mr. Jones) when he says that a statement was made some time ago by Sir Charles Tupper, a statement that has proved to be wholly incorrect, and because that incorrect statement has been made, he is quite willing to withdraw the motion which he proposes to make if the Government will say they will impose a further burthen on the people of this country for an enterprise that is not of any use in the slightest degree. So far as I can understand this enterprise will shorten the communication between Montreal and Halifax by about 17 miles. It seems that when Sir Charles Tupper made this statement in Halifax that it had no foundation in fact, that there was no such arrangement between the Government and the Canadian Pacific Railway, and that he had no authority for making