

information until after it was ordered to be printed, which was on the 21st February. No documents were before the House on the 20th February. Having set myself right on this matter, I beg to add that the Minister of Railways having fully and satisfactorily explained that these roads are entitled to this aid in the interest of the country, and feeling bound to support the general policy of the Government, I shall support the resolutions before the House.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. gentleman having made the remarks with which he has just favored the House for about the hundredth time, and having followed the example of the hon. gentleman in bringing up transactions of some ten or twelve years ago, the House will allow me a few words in reference to matters which took place in another Legislature some time ago. The hon. gentleman's claim is an old one, but it is not a valid one. I have always repudiated it, and I am not going to acknowledge it now. I came in power during a Session of the Ontario Legislature, and I was called upon to deal with the question of railway aid under a policy inaugurated by my predecessor, Mr. Sandfield Macdonald, and to deal with it during that Session of Parliament. The policy of the former Government of Ontario had been to obtain from the Local Legislature a grant of, I think, one and one-half million dollars; they took to themselves the power of distributing it as they pleased, without further reference to Parliament, in aid of railways of a certain general description, wide enough to cover any of them. I was called upon when I came in to attend to the election of myself and colleagues, and the whole business of the Session, and amongst others to deal with this question of railway aid, which was a very pressing question, because many companies had been incorporated and arrangements had been made, so that the general progress of the country was, in one sense, in suspense until the question was disposed of. The first duty I discharged before going to my constituents, was to ascertain what papers there were—what information there was on the files of the Departments as to the different railways which had made application, upon which a judgment might be formed either as to the engagements of the Government or as to what should be submitted to the Chamber. I found, as I often stated, everything at loose ends; and I immediately directed that steps should be taken to obtain such information from the companies, including the negotiations which had taken place between them and my predecessor, and all the evidence showing the exact state of the case. As soon as I obtained that information, I came to the conclusion that the fund which had been proposed by the late Administration would not be adequate to discharge the obligations which, it was suggested, should be entered into. That information was given to the House, from day to day, as it was received, pending the further information which I sought as to the ability of the companies to complete their enterprises, as well as other matters needful, in order to arrive at an intelligent judgment on the whole subject. While this was going on I invited the attention of the Legislature to the subject of a further appropriation, and I gave to the House all the information which was then before me with reference to the negotiations of the late Government, their promises and pledges, and the condition of affairs in that regard; and I succeeded in convincing a majority of the Legislature that it was proper that further aid should be given. During the progress of that discussion, as the hon. member for Lincoln has stated, demands were made upon me to state what aid should be given to particular railways. I stated, as the hon. gentleman has correctly informed the House, that it would not be right for me to accede to these demands at that time, and the reason was obvious. The decision of the Government upon the question necessarily depended upon the resources which the Parliament was

about to place at their disposal. If the Parliament was indisposed to give more than \$150,000, it was quite clear that aid could not be granted at the expected rate, which I think was \$3,000 a mile; and until the Legislature should decide the total quantum of resources which it would place at the disposal of the Government, it was impossible for the Government to determine finally and to inform the House what particular railways they proposed to aid, and in what particular amounts. That was my statement to the Legislature, and I have always been prepared to justify it. But it was quite consistent with that, that we should come to a conclusion ourselves as to what we should propose to the Legislature, in case the Legislature would grant us the aid we expected, and we did proceed to come to that conclusion. But the hon. gentleman says he had no information. He has already said that the Bill was printed on the 20th February, and was actually passed on the 28th or 29th of February.

Mr. RYKERT. It was ordered to be printed on the 20th of February.

Mr. BLAKE. It was printed as soon as it was ordered to be printed, I suppose, and the Orders in Council were not passed, I think, until the 29th. Therefore, it was before the general Bill had passed that these papers were printed, and the Orders in Council were brought down at the earliest possible moment, as the hon. gentleman has said, after the Legislature had decided that we should have these resources to distribute, and I did not ask the House, against the will of any hon. member, to take them into consideration. Neither the hon. member for Lincoln or any other hon. member, asked for delay; on the contrary, the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Cameron, wanted me to say on what day prorogation would take place. I stated that there was important business before the House, that I had no desire to hurry its deliberations, and that I would decline to indicate any day for prorogation until it should appear what business was to be disposed of, and what time the House required for deliberation upon it. No demand or request was made for further time. My hon. friend has said, that on the first motion there were seven dissentients, and on the second, three; and these three hon. gentlemen called for no further divisions, and the rest passed unanimously, until the last on which the hon. gentleman proposed a rider, which expressly assented to the resolution, but proposed to tack on this thing, that thing, and the other thing. I have stated that I was called to deal with a very large matter in the very middle of a Session of Parliament; I have stated that I used the utmost diligence to procure from all quarters the information that was necessary to an intelligent decision by the Government first, and the House afterwards; I state that I laid that information before Parliament just as soon as I obtained it; I state that so soon as I had ascertained that more funds would be required to carry out the practical pledges of the late Government with reference to railway aid, I called upon the Legislature to decide whether they would grant a larger sum, and after debate, resistance and division, the motion prevailed; I state that so soon as the Legislature had decided what amount it was proper to grant for distribution, I laid on the Table the Orders in Council, and signified the view and determination of the Government with reference to these very matters upon which every information had been given to the House from time to time, just as fast as it was possible to give it.

Mr. RYKERT. Had not the Orders in Council been in the hon. gentleman's desk before the House had passed the Bill?

Mr. BLAKE. Certainly; I said so already. I said that we decided for ourselves what we would do if the Legislature would grant us those funds, but that we could not propose to the House those grants until we knew what