

Parliament has ever had to deal with. Taking the amount which may have to be paid under the arbitration and adding it to the liabilities which this country will assume if it takes the stock, this measure involves a sum in the vicinity of \$650,000,000, an enormous burden for the people of Canada. It involves the adoption of a principle which has never been submitted to the people, and this Parliament, whose life has been prolonged by our own votes and at our own request with a view of enabling the Government to do the most effective work possible in carrying on the war, has no mandate, no authority, to commit the people to that principle. The people never dreamed that during its extended life Parliament would undertake to deal with a matter of such vast importance.

I would call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that the committee first began to consider this Bill on the 16th August and that it went out of the committee yesterday or only thirteen days from the time that it was first referred to the committee. If you bear in mind that during that time the Soldiers' Voting Bill was also considered and passed, and that a considerable portion of the Estimates was also passed, I think you will agree with me that there was no undue amount of time taken up with the consideration of this Bill. When you consider further that there were some sixty members upon this side of the House who had not had an opportunity of speaking upon the Bill, I think you will see that the view I present that there was no undue prolongation of the discussion is amply warranted. True, the closure was applied by the Minister of Finance and some bitterness was created which I think came largely from the undue desire to press the matter without having proper consideration for the rights of the minority. I think the Government would get along very much better and could greatly facilitate the carrying on of the business if they had a greater regard for the rights of the minority than they have shown in this case.

This Parliament has been in session since January last, upwards of eight months. Before the recess there was ample time to introduce this Bill and there was a great deal of time after recess to introduce it before it was actually introduced. During the three months that some members of the Government were in England, the members of the Government and of Parliament who were at home might very well have had their time occupied in the consideration of this and other important mea-

asures. But it all comes down to this, that only thirteen days elapsed from the time the Bill was put into the committee until it was reported out of the committee. However, I have no doubt whatever that, as mentioned to the Minister of Finance before recess, in one day the discussion upon the third reading would be entirely completed. I do not know if the minister wants to bring the third reading on to-night with a view to giving notice of the closure. He may decide to do so, but I think he is hardly well advised to give the country the impression that by means of the power that is vested in the majority—by the votes of the majority—they intend to force through this Bill without an opportunity for discussion. I think hon. gentlemen opposite would be very badly advised if they took that course.

Now, with regard to the amendment, I contend it is not fair to the people of this country to impose on them the obligation of paying to Mackenzie and Mann and the interests allied with them, who are the pledgees or holders of this \$60,000,000 of stock, this vast sum of money without the matter again being presented to Parliament after it has been investigated by these arbitrators and without having their report, because their award would be in the nature of a report. This position is enormously strengthened by the fact that in 1914 there was a statutory agreement made between Mackenzie and Mann, the Canadian Northern Railway Company and the Government, by which statutory agreement it was provided that if Parliament would authorize the Government to grant further assistance to the extent of \$45,000,000 Parliament would have the right, if it chose to do so, to authorize the Governor in Council by order, to foreclose the equity of redemption in this property.

Since that time, although the default which is provided for by that statute has occurred, this Government has given further assistance to the Canadian Northern Railway to the extent of \$15,000,000. To-day, instead of the country being placed in the fairly advantageous position in which it would be placed if the provisions of the Act of 1914 were carried out, under this legislation the question is to be submitted to arbitrators, not from the standpoint of the Canadian Northern Railway Company being in default, not from the standpoint that they are obliged to sell, not from the standpoint that the country has lent them vast sums of money and aided them by guarantees and they are in default; but, I think any