

of such urgency when he stated on Wednesday last that he thought that the House might close on Saturday of that week. The Minister of Railways himself has not been in much of a hurry; although for almost a year he has been receiver for the Grand Trunk Pacific, he has taken no particular steps in connection with obtaining a valuation of the assets and liabilities of that road. If the Government could not agree with the Grand Trunk Pacific as to a valuation of its assets and liabilities, the matter could have been referred to arbitration. The Minister of the Interior (Mr. Meighen) said a moment ago that the whole thing is to come up in the arbitration proceedings. But this is done after \$60,000,000 worth of stock has been put aside to be released from the valuation of the arbitrators. We do not even know what are the liabilities of the Grand Trunk. It is not necessary to liquidate by means of an auction sale or by putting the road under the hammer; the amount of the liabilities and assets could be ascertained by arbitration. The receiver of the Grand Trunk Pacific had over eight months in which to do that, but he has not done it. So, if there is any hurry now it is entirely due to the action of the receiver himself.

Mr. J. D. REID: The hon. member says that a week or two ago we were in no hurry. He knows that the Grand Trunk Railway Company have for a year or more been urging that we settle this matter either by arbitration or otherwise. Sir Alfred Smithers has been here for two months. We did not believe that there was any chance of his accepting our offer until a few days ago; but when he did accept our terms, what were we to do then? Were we then to say: We will not bring it up this session; we will wait until next year? Surely hon. members will agree with me, that it was the duty of the Government, having accepted the terms, not to delay, not to pigeon-hole the matter for several months, but to submit it at once to his House for its consideration. We are here to legislate in the interest of the country, and I believe, for reasons which I explained a few minutes ago, it would be suicidal for the Government to hold off for several months. Therefore, having accepted and acknowledged the letter of acceptance, the first thing we did was to submit the matter to Parliament, and I believe it is not in the interest of our great railway system nor in the interest of the country to keep public opinion in an unsettled condition as to the settlement of this great rail-

[Mr. Vien.]

way proposition. For that reason, I say that we, of course, had to reconsider the question of the House closing at an early date.

Mr. H. H. McLEAN: May I ask the Minister of Railways a question? The answer to this question is one in which the people of the ports of Saint John and Halifax are personally and deeply interested. If the Minister of Railways is not prepared to give an answer this evening, I do not ask for one now; but when the Bill is under discussion, I should like a statement from the minister if he cannot give an answer now. My question is this: Is it proposed by the Government to utilize the ocean terminals of the Grand Trunk at Portland, Maine, in the shipping and receipt of ocean freight?

Mr. J. D. REID: Of course, when we are on the Bill, I shall be glad to discuss that matter, but I might say this evening that the ports of Saint John and Halifax have been and are being still further developed for our own Canadian ocean terminals, and the Government intend using those ports to their fullest capacity. There is no doubt about that. We have now the Transcontinental which was originally built for that purpose right into Saint John. But Portland is a portion of the Grand Trunk system and the hon. member will understand that a large portion of the Grand Trunk is in the United States. There is the Central Vermont and other portions of that line, so that Portland will have to be used to a certain extent for portions of the Grand Trunk railway system. But I want to impress upon the hon. member that there is no intention of not carrying out the policy of the Government in the past of developing and keeping our traffic in our own Canadian ports so far as it is possible to do that.

Mr. H. H. McLEAN: The Minister of Railways will understand that our people in the East feel that ocean freight gathered by the Grand Trunk Pacific in the West and other points should be shipped through Canadian ports, and that ocean freight destined for points on the Grand Trunk Pacific in the West should be received at Canadian ports.

Mr. J. D. REID: Certainly that is so.

Mr. H. H. McLEAN: Not only have we in the city of St. John very fine terminals, but the Government is spending enormous sums of money there in developing the port and in providing additional terminals.