

to make, that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Boyce) had improperly received information.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I did not say that.

Mr. HAGGART. Then, I misunderstood the right hon gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) and I beg his pardon. In any case he said that this information had been improperly given by some one in the department.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Yes, if the hon. gentleman's (Mr. Boyce's) information is correct.

Mr. HAGGART. We on this side for the first time have received the information from the Minister of Railways (Mr. Emmerson) that these plans are private and not open to the public. That is an extraordinary position to take. Who can be more interested in the location of the road or in its passage through any part of the country than the public themselves? Is it to bring influence to bear upon the department or the government in reference to a more proper location of the road? But, if the plans are concealed from the public, only those who have charge of the plans know of the matter. The object of plans being filed either with the government or in the registry offices in the different parts of the country is to give notice to the public where the road is to be located.

Mr. EMMERSON. But it may not be located there.

Mr. HAGGART. Where it is proposed to be located. These are located plans of the different terminals filed in the office of the department; and the sole object in filing them is to give notice to every one interested where that road is to be built.

Mr. EMMERSON. If my hon. friend (Mr. Haggart) will pardon me; I will ask him if these proposed plans are not the subject matter of a decision of the government as to whether they will be accepted or not—

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. You may not approve of them at all.

Mr. EMMERSON. Precisely, there is the answer.

Mr. HAGGART. The Act of parliament was amended last year for the purpose of getting the approval of the Minister of Railways in reference to the matter. The hon. gentleman says that these plans are not filed for the purpose of having the approval or otherwise of the government. Why does he seal them up? Why does he tell my hon. friend that there are no plans filed or approved of? Why does he give that answer to the House? What a peculiar position he takes. First of all, he denies there was a plan filed at all; then he gets out of it by saying that there are no plans filed or, and approved of.

Mr. HAGGART.

Mr. EMMERSON. No, I said filed and approved of.

Mr. HAGGART. The very words I used.

Mr. EMMERSON. You used the word 'or.'

Mr. HAGGART. I corrected it and said 'and.' He said there were no plans filed and approved of. What inference would the House draw from that? That there had been no plans whatever in the department. It was only by slow means that the hon. gentleman dragged the information out of the head of the department that the plans had been there for a number of weeks for his approval, but they had not been approved of. There is the position. But it is a new departure that these plans have to be sealed and secret. In old times any one could go to the department, the plans were open, and any one could get a copy if he liked. Perhaps the official who gave copies of the plans looked at the Act of parliament and knew for what object they were filed, and thought that it was within his duty—until he got different instructions—to give them to any one that applied for them.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. I have been reading over the law on the subject in the Railway Act and it provides that once these plans are filed, they are open for inspection, and if any one has an objection to make he can urge it on the minister, and then the minister may order a change in the plans—it is all in that direction. I say we have a right to the plans; and on the other ground, that this parliament is paying for this expensive commission. This parliament represents the country, this commission is dealing with an important interest, and all their plans ought to be subject to parliament.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. If I may be permitted to trespass again on the attention of the House—this question of whether the plans are to be given to the House or not, will come up on Monday when the hon. member for West Algoma (Mr. Boyce) has a motion for the production of these papers. The question may be properly brought up then whether we should give them to the public or not. But the charge he made was that these plans had been improperly communicated to some one, that is the point under discussion.

Mr. FOSTER. With that statement of the Prime Minister, we might let the discussion drop at present and take it up again.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance). Is it fair to the officers of the Railway Department to allow a charge of that nature to be made and stand as it does now? I think the hon. gentleman who has made it—made it in good faith—must feel that he ought to furnish the minister, if