

Mr. MACDONALD: Is the building any less fireproof this year than it has been for the last fifty years?

Mr. REID: No, it is not, but there have been times when it was in danger of fire. I was going to say to the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Pugsley) that I would like the committee to let this item pass, so that I might move that the committee rise and report progress. I want to go on with another Bill which is on the Order Paper, in regard to which we have been waiting for the hon. member from St. John.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Which Bill is that?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: The Canadian Northern Railway Bill.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I understood it was to stand over until to-morrow.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: No. We have been waiting for my hon. friend.

Mr. REID: If the hon. gentleman wishes to let it stand, I am willing to let it stand. Is there any objection to letting it go through to-night?

Mr. MACDONALD: My hon. friend has made no case for the passing of the item. He is asking us to take this money which has been raised by taxation, divert it from the war and use it to make some repairs upon a building which has been in existence for many years, on the ground that the Postmaster General would like to see those repairs made.

Mr. REID: That was not the reason at all. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Blondin) was Secretary of State at the time, and he recommended that this work should be done. I am quite satisfied the work is necessary, and my hon. friend from Russell (Mr. Murphy), who at one time occupied the office of Secretary of State, knows the danger of those buildings. I have no doubt he fully appreciates the necessity of making them fireproof. My hon. friends know that since the beginning of this war the East Block has been used more than ever for holding the most valuable securities.

Mr. PUGSLEY: But, those valuable securities are in a new part of the East Block, which is absolutely fireproof.

Progress reported.

CANADIAN RAILWAY SITUATION.

CANADIAN NORTHERN RAILWAY BILL— THIRD READING.

Sir THOMAS WHITE moved the third reading of Bill No. 125, providing for the
[Mr. J. D. Reid.]

acquisition by His Majesty of the capital stock of the Canadian Northern Railway Company.

Mr. PUGSLEY (St. John): Mr. Speaker, I am going to invite the attention of my hon. friend the Minister of Finance (Sir Thomas White) and the House to an amendment which I desire to have made to this Bill. Before proceeding with what I may have to say, I move:

That the Bill be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to the Committee of the Whole with instructions that they have power to amend the same by inserting between the words "may" and "acquire" in line 1 of section 1 the words "subject to the approval by Parliament of the award hereafter provided for."

It seems to me that every one who is disposed to take a fair view of the rights of the people of this country, no matter what view he may entertain as to the undesirability of proceeding in this way, will agree that if it is determined to acquire the stock of the Canadian Northern Railway Company and to submit the question to arbitration, as proposed, before Parliament is finally committed to any payment the award of the arbitrators should be submitted to Parliament and should be approved of.

Before I proceed to present the few arguments which I intend to present to the House in favour of the amendment, I desire to say that I regret that the matter is coming up this evening, because, before recess, I rather supposed that it was to stand over until to-morrow. I know that my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) was desirous of being present and an intimation to that effect was conveyed to the Minister of Finance (Sir Thomas White). I was informed by my hon. friend from Three Rivers (Mr. Bureau) that the matter would stand until to-morrow if there was any assurance that the debate would be likely to be finished to-morrow. I can assure my hon. friend the Minister of Finance that there is no disposition on this side of the House to prolong the discussion beyond what is absolutely necessary in order to get our views fairly before the country. There was some misapprehension on the part of the Government as to the intention of the Opposition in connection with the discussion while the Bill was in committee. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that there was no desire and no intention to obstruct the Bill. I will tell you why. This is, from the financial standpoint, the most important measure that this or any previous