

should be in this position, that the road would be ready for operation, but that because certain parts of the works, that ultimately would form part of it and would be operated in connection with it, were not completed at the time, the road should lie idle and we should not be in a position to call upon anybody to operate? Was that their intention? It must have been their intention if their argument to-day is correct.

Hon. gentlemen opposite, when they made that agreement, must have assumed that the traffic that the line would have to carry the first day it was run would be just the same as it would be four years after it had commenced to run. If not, then they must have had in contemplation just what took place, namely, that certain works would be under way prior to the completion of the line as an operatable line and would still be under way for some years after the line was operated. That is the actual state of affairs, that is the necessary result and that is a result for which there was no provision in the agreement. Consequently we are in the position we are in to-day. We have to choose whether or not the time has come for the company to take over this road, and if we find it has not come we are compelled to do what never was provided for in the agreement in the first place, namely, to operate the road until these outside works are got under way.

Does the hon. member for South Renfrew contend that his opinion on this matter is better than that of the Chief Engineer of the Transcontinental railway? Is it not a question of fact, is it not a question of railway engineering, whether the road is completed within the meaning of the Act or not? Does he contend that the certificate of the chief engineer is not as positive in its terms, is not as complete, as definite and specific as any certificate ever was? When does the time arrive? When can we call upon the company to take over the road?—when, under section 20 of the Act, is the road completed for the purpose of operation? The certificate of the engineer on that point is in these words. I find in his letter of March 10 last, addressed to myself, the following:

Answering your letter of 6th inst., I may say that I intended the certificate, dated February 2, 1915, (which I signed and forwarded in duplicate to Mr. H. A. Woods, chief engineer of the Grand Trunk Pacific, for him to sign) to be a certificate that in my opinion, as chief engineer of the National Transcontinental railway, it is completed and ready for operation within the

meaning and intent of section 20 of the agreement scheduled in the National Transcontinental Railway Act, 1903.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Did the Solicitor General not ask him to write that opinion? Here is your letter of the 6th.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I suppose that the hon. gentleman contends that I fathered the opinion of the chief engineer of the road?

Mr. PUGSLEY: Undoubtedly.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Then I must congratulate myself on possessing such dominating influence. The hon. gentleman must have great confidence in my engineering ability.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I think that is a fair inference.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That I asked him to write it? We will read the letter I wrote him:

March 6, 1915.

Gordon Grant, Esq.,
Chief Engineer, National Transcontinental,
Ottawa.

Dear Sir,—Referring to your letter of the 23rd February and to the refusal of Mr. H. A. Woods, acting engineer of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company to sign the acceptance dated 2nd February, 1915, it is to be noted that Mr. Woods appears to base his refusal upon the claim that the road at present cannot be said to be completed within the meaning of section 20 of the agreement scheduled to the National Transcontinental Railway Act, 1903. Mr. Woods, I presume has in mind certain portions of the work which at present or rather at 31st December, 1914, the date upon which the audit is being made, may be said to be under construction. I have always understood, both from yourself and from the commission that although there are such portions that are still under construction, the same are not essential for the immediate operation of the entire line, and consequently that it would not be reasonable to wait for their completion until the said section 20 was acted upon.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Hear, hear.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Having so understood from him, and if I had not so understood from him would he not have rebuked that sentence in his reply?

Mr. PUGSLEY: Read on.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I will read more than my hon. friend wants:

—Would you be good enough therefore, to state that in your opinion the Eastern Division was on 31st December, 1914, completed so far as essential for the efficient operation of the entire line at that time and now.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Is that not a request?