

Mr. BORDEN: In so far as there is any distortion of the facts, they have not been handed out by the Government, or by anybody connected with the Government.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACDONALD: It is very easy to find a great many of these hon. gentlemen who have never read this agreement applauding that bombastic statement of their leader—I say, Mr. Chairman, that bombastic statement of their leader. It is as well for us to understand, then. Hereafter, if we take up a Government organ and find that on a certain question certain ideas are held, or a certain course is to be taken, or a certain policy to be followed by the Government, we are to understand that no member of the Government is responsible for that. Who were responsible, for instance, for handing out to the Government papers only last Saturday or Monday, the statement made by the Minister of Finance that the House was not misled last year in regard to the \$7,000,000? Did that drop down from heaven? Or the preliminary statement in regard to the Canadian Northern railway and this fifteen per cent of stock—where did that come from? Does the Prime Minister suggest that there is some young gentleman in the press gallery whose imagination is so vivid, whose omniscience is so great that he can pierce into the minds of the members of the Government and know within a fraction of a degree what course they are going to take on a given question? That is the position, apparently, that he wants us to believe his Government is in. The attempt to form preliminary public opinion on this measure by statements such as I have indicated certainly was made. If the Prime Minister is not responsible for it, there must be some part of his party organization that is responsible. The statement was circulated all over this country that the capital stock of the Canadian Northern railway was to be reduced to \$100,000,000 by this Government. That statement, I suppose, was not officially made either, and no member of the Government allowed the party organs to give that gentleman information to the public. Why, that statement has been reiterated by some hon. gentlemen on the other side who have never read this agreement, and I suppose there are some even yet, who will go out on the stump and declare that this Government has succeeded in reducing the stock of the Canadian Northern railway to \$100,000,000, when as a matter of

fact, they have increased it by \$48,000,000. That statement, I suppose, was not official, but there is not a Conservative organ from one end of the country to the other that has not reiterated it and set it forth as a wonderful feat of statesmanship on the part of these hon. gentlemen. This whole proposal should be a cold-blooded business proposition with no consideration taken into account except the interest of the country. And so it would be if the Government proceeded along the proper lines. Where was the necessity of the party organs misleading public opinion on this question as it has been misled? In this respect and in many other respects, these preliminary statements did not tally with the actual facts as found in this agreement. But it will take some time for the country to realize the gross errors made in the announcements given to the country. And that is why I believe we should have here and now the fullest possible investigation into this question before Parliament ratifies the principle of the proposition contained in this clause. To the proposal that there should be a full and complete investigation into this whole question, I cannot conceive what answer can possibly be made from the other side. This information should be obtained through a firm of accountants who would not merely verify the prepared statements submitted to them by the auditor of the Canadian Northern, as was done by the auditors of the Railway and Finance Departments, but who would go through the books, as is done by qualified auditors in the case of commercial or industrial companies, at the conclusion of the financial year, prepare a statement and give the weight of their name to the correctness of that statement. Why should this not be done in regard to this momentous proposal in respect of which the country is putting itself behind a liability of \$350,000,000 or \$360,000,000? My hon. friend is asking us to pass this clause without having before us the information to which I referred a short time ago with regard to the status, financial and personal, of the contracting firm of Mackenzie, Mann and Company, Limited. Does my hon. friend mean to say that any business firm in this country would accept a guarantee from any joint stock company, I do not care where incorporated, which involved a liability of \$30,000,000, or in which that amount was a very material factor, without having before them the