

(a.) That the Dominion government will grant a cash subsidy to your petitioners of \$6,400 per mile of railway, and in addition 5,000 acres of land per mile.

That is the proposal of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company, the proposal of that company made on the 3rd of November, 1902, and here is the language of the hon. member for North Norfolk as reported in 'Hansard' of the past session at page 8493 :

The government proceeded next to consider a proposition for the construction of the road in the old fashioned way, that of granting subsidies. There was a proposition to build a road from North Bay to the west, which involved a land grant of 5,000 acres per mile and a money grant of \$6,400 per mile.

Of course I am bound to assume that this is absolutely a coincidence, but is it not a most startling coincidence? I cannot quite understand it. The hon. member (Mr. Charlton) proceeded as follows:—

Well, the government have never adopted the system of making land grants to railways, and wisely concluded that this was not a good time to begin it, so that proposition was dropped. Then a compromise proposition was accepted, viz., the construction of a road over which the government should have supervision.

This seems to me hardly to need comment. I must confess that when the member for North Norfolk arose in this House and stated the exact terms of a confidential communication to the government, I would have expected that my right hon. friend would have exhibited some of the indignation we have witnessed on other occasions, and that he would have demanded from the member for North Norfolk how it was, that he became possessed of this confidential document. But on the contrary, the Prime Minister rose in his place and spoke in the most flattering terms of the hon. member (Mr. Charlton), describing him as the greatest authority on transportation in Canada. I do not know whether or not he is the greatest authority on transportation in Canada, but he certainly is entitled to credit for his extraordinary ability in correctly stating the contents of this confidential document which had never been communicated to him. We know that that document was never shown to him; we know that its terms were never communicated to him by any member of the government, because we have the word of the Prime Minister that it never was communicated to the member for North Norfolk or to anybody else; yet the extraordinary spectacle is afforded to parliament of the hon. member (Mr. Charlton), repeating word for word and line for line with literal and exact accuracy, the exact proposal made for aid by the Grand Trunk Pacific Company to this government. It would appear that we should have some further explanation from the government on this subject.

But that is not all; there is more to come. By the lamented death of Mr. McCreary,
Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

we are deprived of certain information which might have thrown light upon this subject. The late Mr. McCreary also seemed to have had a very shrewd and accurate idea on this subject, because speaking in this House on the 29th of April, 1904, he said:

The hon. gentleman (Mr. Barker) is quite mistaken in some of his premises, and I think in future discussions he should correct them. He has no license to say that the Grand Trunk has not demanded as much for the construction of the line from North Bay to Winnipeg as they are now demanding for the construction of the line through the mountains. Had the government acceded to the wishes of the Grand Trunk Railway we would have had a very much worse bargain than we have, the present arrangement secures a shorter railway, better built, and with better gradients.

Mr. CLARKE. The position of the hon. gentleman now seems to be simply that he is trying to excuse the government and to apologize for the enormous subsidies they are giving the Grand Trunk, by making the assertion, without any justification whatever, that the Grand Trunk would not have proceeded to carry out their original intention unless this government built the road from North Bay to Winnipeg and guaranteed three-quarters of the sum required to build the prairie section and the mountain section. What justification has the hon. gentleman for saying this?

Mr. McCREARY. I have the justification that they asked that very assistance.

Mr. CLARKE. From whom? Unfortunately the facts are against the hon. gentleman.

Mr. McCREARY. Not at all.

We therefore see that Mr. McCreary had a very good idea of the contents of this document which has been at last submitted to this House. Further than that, if we can judge from his remarks, he seems to have had an inkling that some member of the government would during the closing hours of the debate, when it was impossible to discuss it, spring this document upon the House. It seems to me that some further light is required as to the extraordinary amount of information possessed by Mr. Charlton and by the late Mr. McCreary as to the contents of this confidential document. By what means did these hon. gentlemen obtain that information; they were private members of the House, and were entitled to no more information on this subject than any other hon. gentleman; by what means were these hon. gentlemen able to use in debate information which never was laid before this House until it was read recently by the Minister of Finance.

Right Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister). I have only one word to say. I have no time to read the extracts which the hon. gentleman has just given to the House, but I may say that there are more ways than one of getting information. I say to the hon. gentleman again, that the document which was placed in my hands by Mr. Hays, in November, 1902, never was