

ing 1,500 miles, which, after it is built and completed, becomes absolutely the property of the company. The people of Canada will have the privilege of becoming responsible for nine-tenths of the cost of construction and then have to hand the road over to a company. I do not believe that the intelligent electors of the Dominion will support a proposition of that kind. I think therefore it is only fair, reasonable and just that they should have an opportunity of expressing their opinion on the proposition of the government, and the amendment I propose is in that direction. I beg to move in amendment :

That the Bill be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved :

That the Bill is intended to ratify and confirm agreements providing for the construction of a transcontinental railway system, a large portion of which is to become the property of a railway corporation to whom the remaining portion is to be leased for fifty years on terms burdensome to the country ;

That under the proposed agreements Canada must incur enormous obligations, both direct and by guarantee, while the obligation assumed by the other guarantor is comparatively small ;

The House believes that before committing the country to such enormous obligations the government ought first to submit to the people the whole question, and especially the question whether Canada should not rather assume the entire obligation and thus own and control the entire proposed line of railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In the contract submitted to us by the government the liabilities of the people are very great and the advantages very small, whereas the liabilities of the company are very small and the advantages very great. I believe that the country is in favour of the amendment I propose. I think that the people should be given an opportunity of saying whether they would not prefer to go one step further—since they are assuming such large liabilities and responsibilities in connection with this great transcontinental line—and become responsible for the small sum for which the Grand Trunk Railway renders itself liable, and take over the whole enterprise from end to end, and operate it in the best interests of all sections of the people of Canada. I must apologize to the House for having taken up so much time, and beg leave to move the amendment I have just read.

Mr. SPEAKER. The question is on the amendment of the hon. member for West Toronto (Mr. Clarke).

Those in favour of the amendment will please say, 'aye.'

Those opposed to the amendment will please say, 'no.'

Some hon. MEMBERS. No.

Mr. SPEAKER. I declare the amendment lost.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Yeas and nays.

Mr. SPEAKER. I have declared the amendment lost.

Mr. CLARKE.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. But we called for the yeas and nays.

Mr. SPEAKER. Not until after I declared the amendment lost. As a matter of fact, I did not hear any hon. gentleman say he was in favour of the amendment.

Mr. SPROULE. After you declared the amendment lost, the yeas and nays were asked for. Until you have declared, Sir, the amendment lost, we have a right to assume that it was carried, and once you have declared the amendment lost, we have the right to ask for yeas and nays.

Mr. TAYLOR. Are you going, Mr. Speaker, to order the members to be called in ?

Mr. SPEAKER. The yeas and nays were not properly called for.

Mr. TAYLOR. They were. After you put the motion, we called for yeas and nays.

Mr. SPEAKER. I am not deaf and I must repeat that I did not hear one hon. gentleman declare he was in favour of the amendment. Consequently I had nothing to do but to declare the amendment lost.

Mr. CASGRAIN. There must be a misunderstanding. It was certainly the intention of this side to have a vote taken. I distinctly heard several gentlemen around me say 'yea.' I do not think, under the circumstances, the House would take advantage of a simple misunderstanding to declare an amendment lost when it was the intention of this side to vote upon it. I do not think there is any intention on the other side to take such a strict advantage of the rules of the House.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. I have always heard the Speaker put the question in this way. He would say, 'I think the 'ayes' have it, or the 'noes' have it and then from the other side the reply comes, 'No.' I was waiting for the Speaker to say that, but he declared the motion lost without going through what I have always understood to be the usual formality.

Mr. SPEAKER. The matter presents itself to me in this way. I put the question in the proper way. I asked those who were in favour of the amendment to say, 'aye.' I repeat that I did not hear one hon. gentleman say 'aye,' either in a low or a high tone. I turned round to the gentlemen on my right and asked those against the amendment to say 'no,' and I heard 'noes' from different portions of the House. As far as I could ascertain, there was no one supporting the amendment, and I had no other course but to declare it lost, and I take it now that, not having declared themselves in favour of the amendment, there is now no right on the part of hon. gentlemen to ask for the yeas and nays. So far as was made known to me nobody was supporting the amendment, and