

want to dwell on this subject for a moment in order to refute the untruthful propaganda which we have witnessed in this country in regard to the Intercolonial railway. And I would point out here that it was not the Liberal party but my hon. friends opposite who were responsible for placing that railway under the Canadian National system.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: Does my hon. friend suggest that it should be again made a political railway?

Mr. COPP: I have said nothing of the kind; I am not considering that question at all. Let me tell my hon. friend just what the situation is. When this government came into power it discovered the foundling on its doorstep, and after due consideration we decided that the best thing to do was to hand it over to the board of directors that had been duly appointed and have them manage the whole thing without political interference in any way.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: I hope the minister does not misunderstand me. He was referring to the Intercolonial railway, which in the past, he stated, had been a political railway, and he found fault with the present system. That is the reason why I asked the question. There is no use discussing the National Transcontinental: it is the Intercolonial to which the minister was referring.

Mr. COPP: As my hon. friend knows, there is only one railway. We took it as he and his friends left it, and we are carrying it on by a board of directors to whom we have handed over the system for operation, and we are not interfering with the board in any way at all. But my hon. friend from the city of St. John (Mr. MacLaren) and my hon. friends from other parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are condemning me because I have not interfered, or helped to interfere, with the railway management in regard to the Intercolonial railway. I am putting the responsibility absolutely where it belongs. It belongs to the Tory party in this House.

Mr. MacLAREN: Does the minister assert that what was formerly the Intercolonial railway is now an integral part of the Canadian National system?

Mr. COPP: Yes.

Mr. MacLAREN: Then how does he reconcile that statement with the attitude taken by the Board of Railway Commissioners that the board has no jurisdiction over that portion of the national system formerly called the Intercolonial railway?

Mr. COPP: The statement I made is absolutely correct; my hon. friend well knows, that the Intercolonial railway to-day is a part of the Canadian National system under an act passed in 1919 when his friends were in power.

Mr. MacLAREN: Would the Secretary of State object to answering my question? Will he explain the attitude of the Board of Railway Commissioners, which, I understand, is quite the opposite to what the minister states.

Mr. COPP: If my hon. friend wants to get information regarding the jurisdiction of the Board of Railway Commissioners, I have no doubt that if he will see the chairman of the board he will be fully satisfied.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Will my hon. friend tell the House when the act of 1919 was put into full effect?

Mr. COPP: I have not that information directly before me. What I have stated in regard to the Intercolonial railway is absolutely correct. It was taken over and made part of the Canadian National system in 1919, and this government has not in any way interfered in regard to the management. Let me refer to a statement made throughout my province that I was negligent in my duty when Sir Henry Thornton took charge and he and his board divided the system into regional districts. I hold no brief for Sir Henry Thornton, but I believe in being absolutely fair and giving credit to whom credit is due. I am not a railway expert and never expect to be. As a Maritime province man, I tell the House frankly that I would be very glad indeed had Sir Henry Thornton and his co-directors seen fit to extend the Atlantic region to Montreal or even further west. They did not see fit to do so; no doubt they had very good reasons for their action. But whether the Atlantic region might be made larger has no bearing whatever on the future success of the whole system. It is purely a local matter in which we in the Maritime provinces are very much interested,—and, I am bound to say, very much disturbed. But I do not believe that any action taken by the board of directors is, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, unchangeable. I hope that the Canadian National Board will yet recognize that it will be just as advantageous to the whole system to enlarge the Atlantic regional district, and I shall always be willing to do anything I can to assist to that end—always bearing in mind that the system has been handed over to the board of directors to do the best they can with. I am bound to state that their management during the past