

company, and get the men who know all about these things—Mr. Hanna knows all about them—to come before a special committee, and I pledge myself that there will be no opposition to putting through the legislation in the most expeditious way possible, if Mr. Hanna says it is necessary to have these charters, and that they will be in the interests of the people of the West and the national railway system.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman will scarcely escape or enable his party to escape from the position in which he has allowed them to be led, and indeed has led them, through the whole course of this day, by the speech which he has just delivered.

Mr. McKENZIE: The day is far spent now.

Mr. MEIGHEN: And little has been done, and the hon. gentleman is responsible, and those that sit around him. He resents the imputation that the influence of private corporations is at the back of the opposition to this clause. The events will speak for themselves. The speeches of hon. gentlemen opposite speak for themselves. The speech of the hon. member for Maisonneuve speaks for itself, and is doubtless well known to the country by this time. He did not take the ground that charters were encumbrances. Nobody in this Parliament or any other ever suggested that idea. Charters entail no obligations, charters are rights which may be exercised or not as the company, under the approval of Government and Parliament, determine them to be wise. To describe them as "obligations," and "carcasses," and "baggage," and "wrecks," is to assume that the hon. members are children or fools. Charters are rights. We know they are rights; we know they are not encumbrances. The country knows they are rights, and the country knows that there is some reason for this opposition to charter rights being granted to the Canadian National railway system. The hon. member for Maisonneuve was quite clear. He said that he was opposed to them for one reason, because if they were assumed by the Canadian National Railway System, which originally held them—and no one else held them—they would not be at the disposal of private corporations. Those words have a clear meaning; no one can mistake them. They would not be at the disposal of private corporations. But I do not attach so much weight to words as I do to deeds.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I never said that.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Will the hon. member tell me what he said?

Mr. LEMIEUX: I will explain for the third time what I said. When we were discussing clause 20 my hon. friend announced to the Committee that he had a list or schedule containing forty-four charters to be revived by that clause. I said: Now the Government does not intend to build those railways—my hon. friend himself said the Board did not intend to build those railways, and that he only wanted to revive the charters. I said: This is a blank collective charter that you are giving to forty-four subsidiary lines of the Canadian Northern, and when these railways are needed, the charters will prevent private corporations or the provinces from building those railways where they are needed. I blamed the Government for putting a blank collective charter in the hands of the Board when the Government did not intend to build.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. member has stated his position precisely as I stated it, only in a lot more words.

Mr. LEMIEUX: No. Be honest.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It would prevent private corporations from building on charters which constituents of the Canadian National Railways own, and which we now seek to own.

Mr. BUREAU: Suppose you do not build.

Mr. MEIGHEN: One sure fact is that we cannot build unless we revive the charters. If the hon. member is afraid of our not building, let him put us to the test by reviving the charters.

Mr. McKENZIE: Does the minister say he cannot build without these charters?

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do. Until these charters are revived we cannot build as this Bill will pass. Is that clear enough? I repeat, I do not attach so much weight to words as I do to deeds. Here we have sat all day asking that a clause pass which merely approves of the revival of charters fixed in a schedule, while that schedule itself awaits the consideration of this Committee and may be amended by this Committee by the striking out of any charter right embodied in it. We simply ask the Committee to affirm in general the revival of charters, leaving the specific charters to the further determination of