

Mr. MEIGHEN: We have been asked this afternoon as I recall the questions, for three things. The first is a list of the 100,000 or 180,000 shareholders of the Grand Trunk; the second is to know what the American Government think of this proposition, and the third is to know how much money we think it will take to put the road into, as I presume the hon. member means, reasonable condition. I have already dealt with the first, and as the suggestion has not been advanced a second time, I presume it is quieted. As to the second, as to what the American Government think of our proposal at some time to operate a road in the United States, I will say another word beyond what I said a moment ago. The hon. member (Mr. Vien) thinks this is wholly unprecedented and that we should have asked the American Government what their attitude was going to be before we ventured to own any stock in the Grand Trunk Railway Company.

Mr. VIEN: To own all of the stock.

Mr. MEIGHEN: To own all of the stock. I suppose they would be content for us to own a piece, but they would not stand for our owning any more, is that it? Where was it ever known before, he said, that one government operated a railroad in a country under the jurisdiction of another? I told him one instance precisely the same as this, not certainly where the mileage was so great, but exactly the same in kind. We operate now through the Canadian National Railway two lines in the United States. That does not satisfy the hon. member as an instance; he does not, I suppose, accept that as a precedent, so I will give him one or two more. He does not seem to be aware, although he poses as a critic here,—

Mr. VIEN: I am not posing at all.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Not posing?

Mr. VIEN: No.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Well, the hon. gentleman put an interpretation to that word that I did not intend. He is really a critic. It is not a matter of pretence; it is a reality.

Mr. VIEN: I am putting questions; I am not criticising.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. member says: Where is the precedent for the Government's operating railway lines in another country? I gave him one before; now I will give him a few more. Is he not aware that the American Government are operating not one but several lines in Canada to-day?

[Mr. Vien.]

Mr. VIEN: The American Government?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes. They did not ask us for permission; they did not ask us what we thought of their action; they just went to work and operated them. They are operating the New York Central into the city of Ottawa.

Mr. VIEN: That is a temporary arrangement.

Mr. JACOBS: They have running rights over the line.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. member draws a distinction again. I suppose he thinks that the American Government would let us operate a few lines a long time or many lines a short time.

Mr. VIEN: Does the minister contend that the American Government own the railways they are managing now? The American Government have temporarily taken over the management of a few lines with the intention, very often manifested, of handing them back to their private owners afterwards.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman has shifted his ground. A few moments ago it was not the ownership that was worrying him at all. He said: When you own the lines, how are you going to operate them; once you begin operating them, the trouble is going to come." It was the operating he was afraid of. When I show him that the American Government are now operating line after line, the New York Central into Ottawa, the Michigan Central in Ontario, the Great Northern in the West—

Mr. JACOBS: Is it not true that these are merely running rights they have over the lines?

Mr. MEIGHEN: No, the American Government are actually operating the railways as a Government, not through a company at all. The American Government did not say "by your leave" to this country.

Mr. JACOBS: The lines belong to Canadian railways, do they not and the American Government have running rights?

Mr. MEIGHEN: To what Canadian railway does the New York Central belong?

Mr. JACOBS: I understand they are running over the Grand Trunk.

Mr. MEIGHEN: No. What Canadian railway does the Michigan Central belong to, or the Great Northern? Those are