

Commission, which was then in control of the Intercolonial railway, should make a report to Parliament upon the value of this railway, in order that when these leases—which would be tantamount to a purchase, inasmuch as they were 99-year leases—came before Parliament we could judge, with a full knowledge of the facts, of the value of the transaction. Well, two years afterwards, under the present Administration, Parliament was asked to supplement that Act and authorize the purchase of those branches outright. Instead of surrounding that Bill with all the safeguards with which we had surrounded the Bill of 1910, we simply added that no such branch lines should be bought without the sanction of Parliament being given to it. Now, this was rejected by the lower House. I am convinced that the Senate was then protecting the interests of Canada. During this session the same Bill was brought before us. It contained a special clause which stated that no money would be paid upon the purchase of those lines without the sanction of Parliament. That was going in the direction, to a certain extent, of the amendment which the Senate had made the year before, and which had been turned down by the House of Commons; yet I am sure the Senate could have gone further and stated that the contracts should be submitted to Parliament for its sanction, yet we allowed the Bill to pass. It is perhaps too late to make a review of the divers amendments which the Senate judged proper to make to public Bills, but whenever the majority of this Chamber passes from the left to the right, I hope that our friends on the opposite side will show as great a measure of independence as we showed towards the preceding Administration that had appointed a majority of the members in this Chamber. Now we are just passing a Bill which we have amended. The Commons refuse to accept our amendments and ask us to take substitute amendments. When they are examined closely they practically tend to the same end, but I think when our work is examined it will be found by the country at large that the Senate have done nothing but their duty in suggesting those amendments. We here are a branch of Parliament having equal powers with the House of Commons, and I should be very sorry for the usefulness of this Chamber if we did not exercise the sovereign independence of our minds and consciences in discharging the duties that have been confided to us.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN—Following in the line just laid down by the hon. Senator Delorimier, I wish to answer a charge of the Prime Minister of this country that the Senate is a partisan body willing to do the bidding of a certain man called the leader of the Opposition. Here, on behalf of myself, and I think on behalf of quite a number of other senators, I deny that charge and throw it back at him. I am fully justified in doing and saying so by the acts and words of the senators who have taken part in the debate on this Bill. What do we find? We find the brightest intellects, experienced men—not young men like myself, but old men—denouncing this Government measure as infamous, vicious, impracticable, absurd, and so on. After denouncing the Bill, they show their independence by voting for it. Now, what has the Prime Minister so say of that? Here are senators in this House who tell the Prime Minister and his Government that his Bill is infamous, impracticable, vicious, absurd, and an outrage on the soldiery of Canada; and yet they turn round and vote for it. Is that not an illustration of their independence? And the Government carried its Bill by six so-called independents. That is the position, so far as this Bill is concerned, and so far as the charge of the Prime Minister against the Senate is concerned. These are plain facts. They are awful to state, but they are more than awful to admit and to have to swallow. I hold that on this Bill the majority are accepting the rejection of our amendments by the House of Commons, and substituting some paltry amendments. Is that not independence? Is that not giving the Government fair play; and the Government intended to have a mailed glove to hold over the electorate of the Dominion of Canada. That is what they intended through this Bill—nothing else, a mailed glove; votes that could be counted for them and against the Liberal party of the Dominion of Canada. The people believe that the soldiers in the trenches should not vote, that the Bill is a disgrace to Canada, and will not be sanctioned if Lord Kitchener holds to his saying—“I am a soldier; no politics in the trenches, no politics for me in the War Office.”

The Senate of Canada shows its independence by swallowing such a Bill as that. What has the Prime Minister to say against it? Is that not enough for me? Hon. gentlemen, I tell you that when the country and the people of Canada come to analyse that Bill, and understand it, as