

measure upon the attitude of a foreign commission, namely the federal power commission of the United States.

It has been obvious for some time that the company would be unable to carry out its commitments before May 1, 1956, and that was confirmed by the minister this afternoon. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that we are placed in a most undignified position when we have to depend on the result of an application before a commission in another country in order to get approval for this line.

I think this should be noted, that in the Ontario legislature the approval of the province's bill was secured because the bill was couched, as Mr. Porter said, in flexible terms. This afternoon the minister drew the attention of the committee to the fact—and it is a fact—that the bill was carried unanimously. "Flexible terms", said Mr. Porter. If I may again quote indirectly from the *Hansard* of the province of Ontario, this is what he said:

If for any reason the present plan does not go through in its present form, or it fails entirely, the bill will permit the government to consider alternatives and advance moneys within the stated limits to further any other arrangement that may be adopted.

Because of that undertaking the bill did go through unanimously. I certainly would advise hon. members to read the debate in the Ontario house, and particularly Mr. Porter's speech on February 21 last, because I think it would be interesting and instructive.

Apparently the Progressive Conservative party in this house is not now in favour of a publicly-owned project. I noted, however, that in his introduction of the bill relating to the Trans-Canada gas project in the legislature of Ontario, Mr. Porter made very clear that the decision was entirely a federal decision. Ontario went along with it because it was a federal decision and responsibility. Again he used these words:

This government is not opposed to public ownership where it may be suitably applied. I think our record substantiates that statement. Our view toward public ownership is not a doctrinaire attitude.

And I may say, Mr. Chairman, that neither is my view a doctrinaire attitude in the sense in which that word is sometimes used.

It has been rather interesting and somewhat surprising to me of late that the Progressive Conservative party is so determinedly opposed to public ownership, and indeed has been opposed to crown corporations established by this country. I would remind them that this is in complete disagreement with the attitude of the leaders of their party in former days. When the building of a new transcontinental railway was under discussion in the House of Commons on April 5, 1904, across very much the same territory as it is

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proposed to build the gas spur line by the two governments concerned, Sir Robert Borden said of that project:

I say that the government itself should build this road; it should build it promptly.

And in the very first clause of the amendment to be made in connection with the proposal of the government of the day he placed his party on record. His amendment first outlined, of course, the aims of the new transcontinental railway, and then he said:

In order to accomplish these results the following objects and considerations should be kept constantly in view:

(a) To develop and extend the government system of railways, and to free the management thereof from party political control or interference.

In other words he wanted to see that line, which eventually did come to us, publicly-owned. Because of the circumstances in later years, this part of the line which was really the national transcontinental throughout was incorporated into the Canadian National Railway system. I say that in these words Sir Robert Borden placed the party on record in favour of a crown company to build and operate the proposed transcontinental railway.

May I remind hon. members of the Progressive Conservative party that when radio broadcasting was under discussion in the House of Commons on May 18, 1932, the former leader of the Conservative party, the late Right Hon. R. B. Bennett, who was then the prime minister of Canada, said this at page 3035 of *Hansard*:

No other scheme than that of public ownership can ensure to the people of this country, without regard to class or place, equal enjoyment of the benefits and pleasures of radio broadcasting.

Then he went on to use words that are directly applicable to the present project. He said:

Private ownership must necessarily discriminate between densely and sparsely populated areas. This is not a correctable fault in private ownership; it is an inescapable and inherent demerit of that system. It does not seem right that in Canada the towns should be preferred to the countryside or the prosperous communities to those less fortunate. In fact, if no other course were possible, it might be fair to suggest that it should be the other way about. Happily, however, under this system, there is no need for discrimination; all may be served alike.

This is truly an irrefutable argument for the public ownership of a project of this description; because of necessity the private corporation will serve the profitable areas first, and will in all probability neglect the smaller areas in between those larger centres and more profitable areas. I say that what we need is a gas pipe-line system that will do justice to those who live in rural areas as well as those who live in cities.