

been postponed from session to session because the Prime Minister and his colleagues declared that they had no mandate to deal with those questions. I am in the judgment of many of my colleagues who do me the favour of listening to me at this moment, when I say that they attended meetings of the Ministerial party at which it was decided that the tariff question, for instance, should not be touched by this Parliament because the last election had been won on the single and only issue of winning the war, and that when that was done the mandate of the Government would be at an end, and they would feel the necessity of returning to the people for another mandate.

I have cited the tariff as one of the questions that should be discussed and settled. It is a question in which all sections of Canada are interested, although perhaps from different points of view. Yet, when strong representations upon that question were being made to the Ministerial party in caucus, the stand of the Government was that they had no mandate from the people on that question. I understand that, as a matter of fact, the members elected to support the Union government were not at one on that question, but that there were serious differences of opinion amongst the various groups that form the Unionist party. I mention the tariff as an illustration to show—and it has been affirmed and reaffirmed since the election—that on many important matters the Government has withheld its hand.

The war is now over. We are met in this special session to approve of the Treaty of Peace. One of the ministers who entered the Cabinet in order to win the war, the Hon. Mr. Crerar, felt that his mandate was at an end, and he withdrew from the Cabinet.

My honourable friends who represent the various provinces in this Chamber are now presented with a measure of the greatest importance, a measure which may have the most far-reaching results, and yet is submitted by a Government that has no mandate to bring it before us. It seems to me that that is one of the considerations which should determine us to accept the suggestion made by the honourable member for Middleton (Hon. W. B. Ross) that this matter should not be definitely settled at this session. A postponement of this question until the next session of Parliament would be but one way of expressing the opinion that it is a matter that has not been sufficiently before the public to en-

able us to decide that public opinion is in favour of it—a consideration that should be sufficient to justify this Chamber in postponing it until the people have an opportunity of pronouncing upon it. I say that because alternative schemes have been presented which would tend in the same direction without being fatal to the undertaking.

I have said that a working arrangement could be brought about between the Canadian National railways and the Grand Trunk railway for providing terminals and an exchange of traffic between the East and the West. If such an experiment should prove unsuccessful, we could then take another step—perhaps the one that is now proposed; and the door would still be open for us to do so. On the other hand, if we now purchase the Grand Trunk railway we destroy a splendid organization which has given good results up to the last few years.

The honourable leader of the Government says: "Let us try the experiment; it is a passing fad; but the people—I do not commend him for his opportunism—at least, the majority of the people who go to the polls—seem to be in favour of government ownership; if it fails, we will try to dispose of this system to another syndicate or organization." I have drawn his attention to the fact that we are taking a great risk in throwing to the winds the present organization. It has ramifications in London, and up to within a very few months ago it has been able to carry on without knocking at the door of the Minister of Finance and asking for assistance in the administration of its business. I think my honourable friend will live long enough to realize that he has parted from a very good friend; and I fear that he will search in vain for a new friend who can fill the place of the friend he has lost.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: Honourable gentlemen, I had intended to inflict my views on this matter upon the House upon the second reading of the Bill. Last night there was a very general wish that the proceedings should be closed. It was nearly two o'clock before we got through, and I am afraid that if I had acted upon my first intention the sitting might have been extended till three or four o'clock. For that reason I did not take up the time of the House.

I have just been told by my honourable friend from Brome (Hon. Mr. Pope) that he intended to speak to-night on the third read-

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND.