

changed his opinion on the great principles involved, because, in the debate on the Crow's Nest Pass Railway last session, there were two very important positions taken by the hon. gentleman to whom I have referred. One was in regard to the great question of preventing connections with the United States railway system in the Kootenay country, on account of the danger, even more than danger, on account of the probability that Canadian trade would be diverted from north to south; and the hon. gentleman then expatiated strongly on the duty of Parliament to do everything possible to divert that trade north instead of south. The second position was in regard to the question of Government control, in connection with which very important principles were laid down, wholly inconsistent with the position by the Minister of Railways, as reported on the present measure. Last session, the Government held the key to the situation. The Minister of Trade and Commerce boasted of the statesmanship that had caused the Government by that measure to have absolute control, or, to use his own language, to ensure the absolute security of the country against the possibility of a monopoly being created which would have any objectionable or ill effect on the future of the province. Quoting the Minister of Trade and Commerce, I find he said:

Remember the Government of Canada are able to control the rates on everything which goes from any part of the Crow's Nest Pass to any portion of Canada, and on anything which comes from any part of Canada to any section of the Crow's Nest line.

And later on he said:

A great deal of trade is now being diverted to American channels. I need not say to business men in and out of this House that there is no one thing more certain than that if once that trade be allowed to flow into American channels, we shall find it exceedingly difficult to recover it.

That is a very important utterance, and those observations covered those points on which this House seemed to be almost unanimous: that is, the ability of the Government to protect, or, at all events, largely protect this country against a monopoly in the operation of the Canadian Pacific Railway system, as it was advanced through that important mineral country; and the other was the necessity of preventing, as far as possible, the possibility of Canadian trade being diverted south. Hon. gentlemen opposite have been signally silent, and it is, of course, curious, because it is no secret in this House that the Minister of Public Works, when this Bill was announced, was open in his consistent opposition to its provisions. He allowed it to be announced, or, at all events, he was credited with having sympathized entirely with those who saw in this Bill a subversion of the important principles that prevailed last session, and he, with others, gave expression

to opinions adverse to this Bill being adopted, and later on, even now, it is said, the Government have by no means come to a unanimous opinion in regard to advice to be given to this committee as to what it should do with the Bill. Under all these circumstances, it would be very interesting to know exactly where the Government stands. I would not be surprised to learn that they unanimously agreed to take the very opposite position to that which they occupied last session; that, in my opinion, would be a very natural position for this Government to take, and a natural course for them to take. But, having regard to all the statements made, I do not think it possible for the Minister of Railways to say that the members of the Government are a unit in regard to the course which this committee should take on this Bill. Perhaps, the silence of the Minister of Railways is wise. Perhaps, the Bill will have an opportunity of being considered on its merits, and, so far as I am concerned, and, I think, so far as other hon. members are concerned who have opposed this Bill, that is all they desire to be done.

So far as these observations are concerned about the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Grand Trunk Railway, and the Canadian Pacific Railway putting up a fight, as the last hon. gentleman who represented the opposition to the Bill said, I think a great deal has been stated without the slightest warrant. I have never heard, directly or indirectly, from any person representing either the Grand Trunk Railway or the Canadian Pacific Railway, what their particular desire was in regard to the Bill. I know, of course, that the Canadian Pacific Railway, very wisely from their own standpoint, opposed this Bill, and no doubt the Grand Trunk Railway, in other words the railway behind this charter, are as anxious that the Bill should pass; but I do not believe that hon. members on one side of the House or the other are posing, or desire to be considered as posing, here for one road or for the other road. Those statements are made very cheaply and very easily, but what we must be guided by here, and what the whole country will certainly be guided by, are the reasons and arguments advanced on one side or the other. The utterances of the Minister of Railways, of the Minister of Trade and Commerce and the member for Yale and Cariboo being all in line one with another, are of additional interest this year, because they are in line, not merely with the resolution of the British Columbia legislature, but, as it seems to me, regardless of what particular division was had on that resolution, with a large majority, almost the whole, of the British Columbia legislature; for it is interesting, since reference has been made to that division, to see what position the leader of the opposition, Mr. Semlin, took when the question came up, or, at all events, to see the position that was