

ment moved by my honourable friend that this Bill be not read a second time now but be read this day six months, it was suggested that the situation be examined into anew to see what would be the action of the Government in view of the position taken by some honourable gentlemen in this Chamber. It is now my duty to state that the Government has adopted as its policy, heralded to the public, the principle of giving a free hand to the Board constituted to administer the railway business of Canada. It has appointed a President who has experience and a high reputation in the railway world. That President and his Board, surrounded by a Management composed of old officials of the three systems that have been amalgamated, have gone through the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific to see what reforms could be made in the way of an amelioration of the physical and financial conditions of the system. The new railway Management, having surveyed the ground, has suggested a certain policy to the Government. That policy consists of building a certain number of branches, upon which the country has already spent some \$10,000,000, and to develop a scheme of construction in order to complete those railways within a term of three years. The Government has obtained information from its own railway officials, and, after a close study of the request of the Railway Management, has decided to submit to Parliament the programme of the Railway Board.

That programme was accepted by the House of Commons, and it is now before us. I stated last evening that it was late in coming before this Chamber, and that I expected that if and when this Bill went into Committee, every member of this Chamber who had a personal knowledge of a line of railway projected in his locality or region or Province should give his opinion upon the necessity of the work. It seemed to me that we might examine closely into the value of the propositions before us; that if there was merit in any of them, we should so declare; that if it was doubtful that any of these various branches were absolutely needed to-day or in the near future, we could withhold our assent. But I thought that when the Railway Management submitted to the Parliament of Canada a plan of development which, in their minds, would improve the financial condition of the railway and help to increase the population by attracting immigration to the regions which will be served by these branches, we should not refuse to examine into the proposition.

I did not go further, and I now say to the Senate that it is the desire of the Govern-

ment that Parliament should give its attention to the proposition.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Would the honourable gentleman allow me a question? It has been stated to me that unless we accept the whole programme we are not in a position to do anything. Do I understand the leader of the Government in this House to say that if in the opinion of this Chamber any one of those lines should be abandoned we have the right to express our views, and it will be abandoned? Is that the position?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I have no mandate to answer in the affirmative; but I have the right to say that I hold the view that the Senate has power thus to act. Holding that view, I feel that the Government is on safe ground when it brings this legislation before this Upper Chamber and asks: "Will you kindly give your ratification if you deem it proper?" I would not object if this Bill, going to Committee of the Whole, were deemed of such importance as to be referred to a Standing Committee of the House in order that persons and papers might be called for and the Senate might reach a decision regarding it. I believe it to be the duty of the Senate of Canada to scrutinize this Bill carefully, and all the more so because of what it means at present and for the future. It is more important than most Bills that come before us. It needs our ratification. I believe we have the right to say how far we will go in approving of it.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: The honourable gentleman has stated his personal views. On the other hand, we have before us a motion that this Bill be given the six-months hoist. I am not in favour of that motion if I am in a position to vote for such portions of the Bill as I think should be passed; but when we come to a vote to amend the Bill, the ruling may be given that we have no power to do so. Before we vote on the motion to give this Bill the six-months hoist I would like to know exactly where I stand, because I am in favour of a large portion of this Bill and would like to see some parts of it passed.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Honourable gentlemen, I stated in the first speech which I made from this place that I accepted entirely the principles laid down in a resolution which had been passed unanimously by this House, and which may be called the Ross resolution. While standing by the conclusions arrived at by the Senate, I feel that this Chamber might well declare, for instance, that it will agree to the policy of completing railways that have already been begun, or that have already