

recollection and information, but I think I am correct in stating that the present Conservative party in the province of Manitoba adopted the platform upon which they appealed at the elections, and that platform included the following statement :

The adoption of the principle of government ownership of railways in so far as the circumstances of the province will admit, and the adoption of the principle that no bonus should be granted to any railway company which does not give the government of the province control of rates over the lines bonused, together with the option of purchase.

Such was the platform. I remember my hon. friend, the railway expert of hon. gentlemen opposite, telling us a good story one day of a coloured man on the end platform of a car that somebody wanted to stand on. He said : Massa, you bettah git into de car. The person asked : What is the platform for, and the coloured man replied : Well, sah, platforms are to get in on and not to stand on. Evidently this platform in the province of Manitoba was a platform to get it on, because no sooner had they got in on this platform than they immediately repudiated government ownership, and began to give reasons why government ownership was not a good thing. I find that the Prime Minister of Manitoba, Mr. Roblin, made an explanation of the policy which he adopted when he made an arrangement with the Canadian Northern. He argued then that the policy which he had adopted was better than public ownership. He said :

Now the question I proposed to myself was why would we want the Northern Pacific as a government road? We realized that we could not operate it and secure such material benefit for the people of the country as we desire without subjecting ourselves to all the dangers which threaten to overtake government operation of roads as shown in other portions of Canada. We realized that it was not wisdom to undertake the control of the road and operate it ourselves and make it part of the political organization of the day.

So that we find that in almost the only province in which our Conservative friends hold power they got into power by the proclamation of their policy of government ownership, and having got into power they immediately began to give reasons why government ownership is a bad thing. When we put this in connection with the little incident I mentioned before, and in connection with the action of Mr. Mackenzie in building many miles of government road, and of the friends of hon. gentlemen opposite in immediately handing it over as a free gift to the Canadian Pacific Railway, I think we have very good evidence as to the disposition of hon. gentlemen opposite in relation to government ownership.

A RIDICULOUS PRETENSION.

But I think I ought to go back and make another use of the incident to which I have already referred. I have difficulty in quite understanding which of the opposition policies I should speak to, and so I have to speak to them all in turn. Therefore, I want to go back to the policy as advocated by my hon. friend from East Hastings (Mr. Northrup). We are to give over to the Grand Trunk Railway Company, this soulless corporation, this American corporation, as described by my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, this hostile corporation—as described by many hon. gentlemen opposite—with large government aid, the construction of a line from North Bay to Winnipeg, and from Winnipeg to the Pacific coast. That is the last declaration of hon. gentlemen before this amendment on the question of government ownership. Surely, Mr. Speaker, in the presence of a record like that, no man in this country is going to assume for one moment that hon. gentlemen have given this subject the serious thought and deliberation which they should give to a great question of this character, and I venture to say that the suggestion already made, the proposition—if it be a proposition—that the Conservative party in the face of that record, is to become the champion of government ownership, is a pretension that will be received with just ridicule and condemnation by the intelligent people of this country.

THE COST OF THE NEW ROAD.

I realize, Sir, that I am rather occupying too much time. Perhaps I may plead that hon. gentlemen opposite have spoken very frequently, while, excepting a few re-