

was prepared for them by Mr. Lash—by Mackenzie and Mann, and there was not, in the House, one minister, not excepting the Acting Prime Minister, who could answer one question without first submitting it to the gentleman who was sitting to the left to supply them with the information which Mr. Lash had furnished to the Government in order to put something over on this country. The Acting Prime Minister, with a great flourish, came in shortly before six o'clock for the purpose of bringing in closure on a Bill embodying forty-four charters, after less than two hours' debate, and without a copy of the amendment being submitted to this Committee.

In fact, the Bill we are debating now was only distributed when we came into Committee at three o'clock to-day. And yet, hon. gentlemen opposite hope to lead the country to believe that the Opposition has been obstructing because it was opposed to public ownership! Why, the Acting Prime Minister himself would not state whether he was in favour of public ownership or not. He has never told the House where he stands on public ownership; it is not on record anywhere that he is in favour of it. Why, then, should he insinuate that hon. members on this side are not in favour of public ownership? The reason the Government have brought in closure is because they are not in a position, or are unwilling, to reply to the questions we have asked. They are not able to explain the clauses of the Bill, and their only hope of getting it through is by applying the closure. The Government has a majority of over fifty, and after a debate of only two hours they bring in closure, because the Opposition is making things so hot for them and they do not want to be delayed.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. CAHILL: Absolutely; there is nothing else to it. There is not a man on the Government side who can explain the clauses of this Bill, and hon. gentlemen opposite know it. That is the reason why they refused to debate the clauses in Committee, when we can get up and ask questions and put them in the hole they are in now. The Government cannot explain their attitude or their actions, and if they attempt to stand up and defend Mackenzie and Mann and their crowd, they will soon find they are on very thin ice and have only a very slim following in the country. Hon. gentlemen opposite try to throw the blame on this side of the House, and ask, what will the country think? Mr. Chairman, I

[Mr. Cahill.]

should like to go to the country and see what the people think about the Government and Mackenzie and Mann on this question. I should like to go to Ontario or any other place where there is a vacant seat and debate the question of public ownership under the control of Mackenzie and Mann and the Minister of Railways and with the advice of Mr. Z. A. Lash. If hon. gentlemen opposite are so brave about what is going to happen to members of the Opposition for their attitude on this question, let them go to the country now in any constituency that the Government will throw open, and see what the country thinks on their own attitude on public ownership, before they attempt to blame us. We are not objecting to public ownership of this railway. We have the railway, and we want an honest management of it, but I have no hesitation in saying that I do not expect it with this Government in power, because they have not been honest in their dealings with the railway situation so far. The question of public ownership has not been raised in this House. I tried to bring it up last year but could not get a debate on the subject. The members of the Government would not say whether they were in favour of public ownership or not. The Government will not tell us to-day whether they are in favour of public ownership, but prefer to draw a red herring across the trail and blame the Opposition for holding up the Bill.

I should like some information on clause 2, but I have very grave doubts of getting it, because the only information we got on Friday was from back benchers, who were immediately gagged when the minister saw they knew something and were willing to impart it. Clause 2 deals principally with the date of the annual meeting, and in this connection I wish to make a suggestion to the Government. The clause provides that the annual meeting shall be held on the second Thursday in April of each year. Now, the statistical year ends on December 31st, and the year of most companies ends in December, and in order that Parliament may have the necessary information—if the Government intend to give us any, which I very much doubt—I would suggest that the date of the annual meeting be changed to the end of December. But if the Government can give a good reason why the date should not be changed, I shall be content.

Mr. J. H. BURNHAM (West Peterborough): It is really an extraordinary thing