

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN: I do not think it should be taken into consideration. I do not like having addressed to us such utter nonsense as is in that message. I should not mind the Commons' rejection of our amendment if they would give us a reason that is true. To tell us that that restores to the balance sheet a certain sum which is being written off is an affront. We know it does not, and they know it does not.

I feel disposed to meet the leader of the Government in this matter, although I have still not the slightest doubt as to the merits of our stand. In fact we yielded, yielded, yielded right along. Because we insist on the people knowing the facts, so as to try to bring their psychology to a realization that we cannot continue going into debt for ever, we are accused of being enemies of the Canadian National Railways. I have heard this accusation for many years. I suffered from it all the time I was leader of the Conservative party. Although, at a cost of no fewer than fifty seats in this Dominion, I was the main actor in the drama that brought about ownership of the National Railways by the country, men who then pointed their finger at me as the rascal author of the programme now hold me up as the enemy of the National System. I do not know how anything could be more preposterous—I had almost said more cruel. The story commenced in 1921. One man was the principal in the whole programme of disseminating that story through the Dominion. He is the same man who was mainly responsible for the \$100,000,000 of added debt through nine years of revel. He was the head of the forces marching through all that débâcle.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Is he a member of Parliament?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: No, he is not a member of Parliament. To be very frank, I refer to Sir Henry Thornton. He was the man who disseminated that story and thus was responsible for the alignment of that entire railway vote almost to a man. Now we hear the charge again. If you seek, even by a footnote, to let the people know that this road financially is not being made a success, that it is going into debt at a ghastly rate—if you do not, indeed, enter into a conspiracy with others to conceal it from the people, you are the enemy of the Canadian National Railways. That is the political side of this matter. It appeared even in this House, where it certainly had no right to appear. How anyone can stand up and represent me as the enemy of the National Railway System I do not know. If anyone in Canada should have profited in reputa-

tion by the success of the system, I do not think it would be any other than myself; at least, no one certainly should have profited more. Such has never been my lot. Of that I am not complaining. But I am complaining of being pointed out one hour as the author of the wickedness and the next hour as the enemy of what I created, and particularly of being represented as the enemy because I feel it is better for the Dominion that, even when we are doing right in respect of our accounting, we do not endeavour to mislead the people to their own wrong.

With those remarks I am going to accede to the position of the Government. So far as the honourable leader is concerned, we have been fairly treated, though I do lament that he, too, was a party to the constant dispersion of the story that I have been an enemy of the Canadian National Railways. I think he has done the best he could to have the Government meet us in the matter, and on account of that I am going to accede to the position as far as I am concerned. I hope I may speak for all here when I say I do not insist on our amendment in its original form.

Hon. RAOUL DANDURAND: I must express my appreciation of the stand that my right honourable friend takes on this Bill as it is now before us. I think the main difference between us has nothing to do with the Bill. What is in his mind, as in the minds of us all, is the question: What can we all do, collectively or individually, towards improving the financial situation of our railway system? Unfortunately we have not, legislatively, made very great advance towards improving the situation. I said yesterday, or the day before, that we had been met by two policies to which we had to bow: the one which carried the day in 1930, and the one which carried the day in 1935. What will to-morrow bring? My honourable friend from Montarville (Hon. Mr. Beaubien) has suggested that the people will speak. Well, in the solution of a problem of such importance and intricacy as this, the only men upon whom we can rely are the ones who have been and still are striving to bring about a remedy; and they are to be found in the two branches of Parliament. I have yet to hear of any constructive policy from outside which has been reflected in the attitude of the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada. It does not matter what kind of balance sheet we present, for nine-tenths of the people of Canada do not understand a balance sheet. So in reality the responsibility is upon us.