

cheaper. The reason is, there is competition to Vancouver, and no competition to Calgary. That is the story all over the country. It comes with very ill grace from hon. members residing at centres which enjoy railway and water competition, to come here and say there is no benefit in railway competition, and that competition does not compete. In this case, I hope they will allow us who have not the benefit of competition to say what we want. What has made Montreal the leading city of Canada, if it is not competition between the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Pacific Railway? What would Montreal be to-day except for that competition? What is necessary in that case is necessary in others; the principle is the same; and there is no part of the whole Dominion in which such competition is more necessary than in the western country, and especially in the Boundary Creek district.

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS** (Mr. Blair). I have sat here for some time, during the whole of this debate, and have heard a very strenuous demand from certain quarters on the other side of the House calling upon the Government to declare its policy upon the subject of this Bill; and it has been assumed by hon. gentlemen who have made this demand, that it was a proper request to make, and that there was a duty resting upon the Government to declare its views upon this question. I am unable to acknowledge the soundness of that proposition. I entirely deny that the Government must sit in solemn conclave upon every private Bill that is submitted to this House, and marshal its followers as supporters of the Government on every piece of legislation that is submitted for treatment. I entirely deny it; and I think some of the hon. gentlemen who have been so urgent that we should make our voice heard and declare our policy, are too well informed upon the constitutional view of this measure to have seriously believed that their claim was well founded. My hon. friend from Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper), who is at this moment not in his place, who is usually fair, and whom I am always glad to hear, is one of the sinners, if I may say so, in this respect; and the hon. gentleman has not only been very anxious to hear but exceedingly solicitous that we should tender our advice upon this question. My hon. friend, so far as my acquaintance with him as a member of this House is concerned, is never exceedingly anxious for the advice of the Government in guiding his judgment or leading him to a conclusion on any question, particularly if it happens to smell of a political nature. The hon. gentleman knows the Government is under no constitutional duty at all on a question of this sort, but that, rather, its duty lies in the other direction; unless it is impelled by a sense of duty and having regard to the magnitude of the question to make it a

Mr. OLIVER.

Government question, it would be wrong in doing so. Its first duty is, in matters of private legislation, so far as it can do so consistently with public interest, to leave its supporters entirely free from Government influence, and that is the position in which, I think, this Bill stands. Some hon. gentlemen have said that, in a discussion which took place in another place, and which I thought it was a very exhaustive discussion and rendered it quite unnecessary that the debate should be continued in this Chamber, I took some pains to leave the impression that I was speaking for the Government in expressing my views on the question. I challenge any hon. gentleman who was present on that occasion, to say that I used any language which could fairly be interpreted as having that meaning. On the contrary, I simply expressed my own individual views upon it, and I carefully abstained from expressing an opinion for the Government, or any member of it, other than myself, because I was not authorized to speak for the Government. The Government had not taken the question up as a Government measure, and did not regard it as one of sufficient magnitude. Now, Sir, another complaint which has been made, and one which has really constituted a large portion of the subject-matter of this debate is, that, in my views on this Bill expressed elsewhere, I had taken an entirely inconsistent attitude with that which I took upon the Crow's Nest Pass Bill a year ago.

Mr. DAVIN. Hear, hear.

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS**. My hon. friend (Mr. Davin) says "hear, hear." He has done all that in him lies to establish that proposition. He read from what I said a year ago, it was read before that by a prominent member of Parliament in the committee, and it has been read a third time since the present debate commenced.

Mr. DAVIN. I read it first in this House.

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS**. Yes, the hon. gentleman (Mr. Davin) is entitled to the distinguished honour of having read it first, and it is perhaps my duty to say that he read the speech very well and with a proper amount of emphasis; but I have to add, without any understanding of that speech. What I said a year ago was said with regard to a totally different question, and I would say the same thing to-day if a similar question were before this Parliament. Last year I was dealing with a problem, the very antithesis of the problem before us in the present Bill. Last year we had before us a proposition from the Government asking Parliament to grant substantial aid for the purpose of enabling a Canadian road to be constructed in territory which was then not occupied by a Canadian railway, but was occupied by a railroad coming from the south, and the con-