

to be made a success, as I hope it will, there must be no interference by the Minister of Railways or any other member of the government. That is the position I take.

That was the position taken by the then Minister of Railways in the presence of my hon. friend who was then Minister of Finance, and who in accordance with constitutional usage was responsible as a member of the cabinet for what the Minister of Railways was saying in the House.

To sum up, I say that the attitude taken by the government to-night is the only attitude that can be taken in view of the law which was passed by the former government and which was supported by my hon. friends who now sit to the left of the Speaker. We cannot take any other position. I would not go as far as to say that I approve of this situation. I would not go as far as to say that it is a situation that is very favourable to the people of Canada, and to their representatives in parliament. But we have to follow the law which was passed by the former government, and passed under closure notwithstanding the representations which were made by the members of the then opposition. When my hon. friend the ex-Minister of Finance goes further and asks for information concerning this famous Paris syndicate his memory must be very short. The members of the opposition at that time got up and asked for information. That information was refused by the government in which my hon. friend was Minister of Finance, and refused for the reason that it was not in the public interest that it should be given.

In this country, Mr. Chairman, especially when a man occupies the very exalted position which is occupied by the ex-Minister of Finance is it possible to maintain that a statesman or a public man, who wishes the welfare of his country and that only, can take one attitude when he is a minister and change that attitude when he quits office? Either my hon. friend was right when he was Minister of Finance and supported the measures which I have just mentioned, or he was not. I think he was sincere at that time and if he was, he certainly cannot maintain the attitude which he has assumed to-night; he cannot ask us to believe that he is as sincere to-night as he was then. If he is sincere to-night was he sincere two years ago? I doubt it.

We had to adopt a situation which is not the product of our own policy. We fought the policy of the former government but the law which they introduced and passed is now in force. The railways are now owned by the

[Mr. Cannon.]

public. They have to be managed and administered, and they are managed and administered in accordance with the provisions of the law passed by the Borden and the Meighen governments. My hon. friend was a framer of those laws. He was one of the ministers who supported those laws in parliament; and to-day, now that he is leading the opposition in the absence of his right hon. leader, I do not think that he will increase his prestige throughout the country in any way by creating difficulties for the Minister of Railways, when he knows that the minister is simply doing what the law allows him to do and nothing else. It would be detrimental to the public interest to give the information for which my hon. friend is asking. He knows that quite well.

In conclusion I simply wish to say that I have not changed my attitude in regard to this matter. I fought those laws when they were introduced into parliament, and I hope that sooner or later some means will be found whereby the representatives of the people will be given a stronger control over the administration of our railways. That can only be done by changing the laws that are now on our statute books. I wish to express the hope that the government will satisfy the people that the bonuses voted to the former officials, and to some of the present officials, will be thoroughly investigated, and that these gentlemen will not be allowed, when we have an enormous deficit like we had last year, to receive the large amounts which they voted to themselves. The people of Canada are called upon to pay taxes, and very heavy taxes, to meet our railway deficit. We are called upon to economize in practically every branch of our railway administration. Let the railways themselves give an example of economy. I have a hope, and a firm hope, that the government will see to it that these bonuses are refunded so that the people will know that if our railways are costing us a large sum of money, we at least are doing what we can to curb extravagance.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I think my hon. friend from Dorchester (Mr. Cannon) is quite right in one respect. He has a right to expect sincerity and consistency on the part of our public men. He has charged me with inconsistency and lack of sincerity to-night, but I am going to show him that I am both consistent and sincere. I do not want to see the tu quoque argument which is always used by my hon. friends across the aisle when they say "Did you not do this and did you not do that?" I