

And he concluded:

I am opposed to Government ownership under these conditions.

I submit that that gives a clue to the attitude of hon. gentlemen opposite on section 20 of the Bill, which was so much discussed in this House. That section provided for the revival of charters owned by the Canadian Northern Railway system, many of which authorized the construction of railways in the West, and my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition said in 1917:

If the people of the West will trust themselves as far as spreading out of the branches of any Government owned railway is concerned to Government ownership, they will find it will be a failure.

Again in 1917 he said (Hansard p. 4529):

I am not in favour of public ownership. I am against it. But if we are down to the position when we have to take over the ownership of this road, let us take it clean cut, let us take everything in connection with it that will be of benefit and service to the people.

Later in the same year he interjected into the speech of the hon. member for South York (Mr. Maclean) this remark (Hansard p. 4533):

Sir John Macdonald was opposed to public ownership.

To which the hon. member for South York replied:

No, he was not.

In 1917 the leader of the Opposition also said (Hansard p. 5035):

While the Government ownership of railways may be all right in itself, I am not at all in favour of it. . . . We have the example of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It is not a Government owned railway.

And he argued that if default was made we should take everything embodied in the agreement of 1914. In 1918 my hon. friend (Mr. McKenzie) endorsed the policy of Sir Wilfrid Laurier so far as railway building was concerned. He added (Hansard p. 1379):

There was a good deal of criticism then (1911) by newspapers supporting the Government of the railways the Government had on their hands at that time.

He went on to say that in my first Budget I had made no complaint of the financial situation, and had said, while making some criticism of the Grand Trunk Pacific, that it "was a valuable asset to the Canadian people." Coming down to the last debate, my hon. friend said:

I was never in favour of Government ownership. I am not in favour of it now, as I think private enterprise will do better in these

[Sir Thomas White.]

matters. Particularly in colonization and development will private enterprise do much better than Government ownership.

I am not putting this forward by way of criticism of the hon. leader of the Opposition. He is perfectly entitled to hold the views he does, but what is essential is that it should be known where he and those whom he leads stand on this question, and I submit that the extracts I have read indicate clearly the profound distrust of the leader of the Opposition of the principle of public ownership of railways.

Mr. McCREA: Does the minister mean to say that because persons hold different views from his own they should be gagged?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: In the first place I do not admit that hon. members were gagged at all. It was the fault of hon. gentlemen opposite that closure was applied.

Mr. McCREA: The fact that a man is opposed to public ownership is no reason why he should not be allowed to speak.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: I entirely agree, but it was not because hon. members were opposed to public ownership, but because the opposition to various sections of the Bill seemed to be carried beyond the proper limits of debate, that closure was applied. What has been the attitude of the first lieutenant of the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Lemieux) on the question of public ownership? During the present session the hon. member for Maisonneuve said (unrevised Hansard p. 1815):

Speaking again on this question of public ownership, it is a popular fancy at the present; but really those who favour that new fancy should take the time to read some of the best authorities on the question.

He said further, during the present session (Hansard p. 1901):

It is all very well for my hon. friend from South York to say, as he did a moment ago, and as my hon. friend from East Algoma said in the fair statement he made this evening, that Ontario and the West want Government ownership. But give to Ontario and the West a few figures as I have done this evening, and you will find that the business sense of the people of those provinces will pause and they will ponder before launching Canada upon such a venture.

The hon. member for Maisonneuve quoted from the report of a speech by Lord Shaughnessy at the Canadian National Exhibition and referring to that he said that Lord Shaughnessy is a man "who knows whereof he speaks," and added that "the words of Lord Shaughnessy were full of wisdom." Lord Shaughnessy is a very able man, but nobody could accuse him in his present posi-