

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): I do not know that, but I will tell my hon. friend that I personally appeared before the Railway Commission in the province of Nova Scotia and asked them to declare where they stood on this question, and whether they had any right to fix rates or any responsibility in regard to rates, and they said, "No."

Mr. MEIGHEN: But they had final authority.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): My hon. friend is probably not aware of it, but they had a letter from my hon. friend the late Minister of Railways, Hon. Dr. Reid, telling them that whatever rates were fixed for the Canadian Pacific Railway from St. John would be adopted on the other road. Mr. Hanna, the general manager of the road, under the Minister of Railways and the railway department, fixed the rates, and they are responsible for the rates. It is not merely a question of rates. Nothing can be bought along the railway for any purpose whatever, unless it is purchased in Toronto or up in Ontario. Take the question of coal. Here we are in Nova Scotia, the only coal producing province in the Dominion east of the Rockies. These men in charge of the railways purchased over a million tons of coal in the United States, brought it in last year, and hauled it within a measurable distance of the city of Quebec. We could have supplied that coal from our mines, and our miners were out of work at that time. That is an indication of the utter lack of sympathy that has characterized the management of this railway, and I want to say that every man that lived along the line of that railway, whether he sits on this side of the House or on the other side, was pledged in this respect at the last election.

I wanted to put before this House these two situations, which warrant the statement that the Government was going to inquire into this matter, and that there should be due consideration given to the question of co-ordination, having regard to the situation of the Intercolonial and the Grand Trunk. I have no hesitation in saying that if by legislation this Parliament undertook to take away any rights or privileges we have under the British North America Act, it would be the duty of the local legislatures of our provinces to appeal to the Imperial Government to disallow any such legislation. There are two important things in regard to this

[Mr. Macdonald.]

matter that are well worthy of the attention of the House and the Government. So far as we are concerned in the Maritime provinces, we ask no exceptional favours. The freight rate problems are general throughout the whole country, and we are perfectly willing to pay our proper share in regard to that, but we do not propose to have the management from Toronto sending down to us Canadian Northern engines and cars, and taking our locomotives away and running them on other railways. We do not propose to sit quietly down and permit that to be done. We do not propose to have these men who do not know anything about our business down there trying to dominate us and our personal interests in our province. That is true of all the Maritime provinces, and I venture to say there is not a man from New Brunswick on the other side of the House who will not support the position I am taking in regard to this matter.

We have given a great deal of care and thought to this question, and the result of all these things I have mentioned shows that the people who have been directing the government-owned railways for the last three years have not been able to produce results that have been satisfactory to the country. I think every hon. gentleman will agree with that. My hon. colleague from Nova Scotia (Mr. Fielding) has a very heavy and grave task before him in dealing with the problem, to obtain the finances necessary to meet the deficit. I do think the solution of this problem is of the greatest possible importance to the whole country. It is a most serious matter for these gentlemen who live in the West, and it interferes with us in the East as well. How to find a way out in the best interests of Canada is the problem, and I sympathize with my hon. friend the Minister of Railways (Mr. Kennedy) on account of the very heavy responsibility that has been placed upon him in dealing with the heritage that comes to him from the maladministration of the right hon. gentleman on the other side of the House. I do not think we can have in this Parliament any pretence from him or from any of his followers that this railway situation was occasioned by any act of the Liberal party. It is here purely and solely on account of the partisanship, the living-from-day-to-day policy, that characterized him and his followers in dealing with all the questions which they dealt with in the past.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Oh, oh.