

Mr. MACDONALD: I happen to worship at a Presbyterian shrine and not at the shrine of Ste. Anne de Beaupré.

Mr. REID: Does the hon. member belong to my church?

Mr. MACDONALD: I do not know how some of my hon. friend's confreres from Quebec who are so terribly anti-French these days—

Mr. SEVIGNY: I do not think they are worse than the hon. member for Pictou.

Mr. MACDONALD: The minister does not know my mentality.

Mr. SEVIGNY: I know it.

Mr. MACDONALD: The minister knows that my ancestors and all my people and myself have been associates of the French race for three or four generations and we have no antipathy against them. He has associates behind him and men who support him, men who, I am surprised, would support a proposition that the Government of Canada should own and operate a railway for the purpose of carrying people to the shrine of Ste. Anne de Beaupré. That is the only part of the railway which the Minister of Customs undertook to defend as being a commercial proposition. He said that part of the railway paid.

Mr. REID: It was the hon. member for Rouville who said that.

Mr. MACDONALD: My hon. friend defended that proposition. He did not say anything about the Lotbinière and Megantic or the Quebec and Saguenay. What I say is this: This whole proposition is a disgraceful perversion of public

11 p.m. money in war time for the purpose of satisfying a political supporter from the province of Quebec. When you are taxing the people by the various methods adopted by this Government, when the Minister of Finance is speaking about economy, to divert this money for this purpose is absolutely defenceless.

Mr. NICKLE: Last year when this question was before the House, I differed from my confreres on this side of the House as to the wisdom of the vote. The few remarks that I am now about to offer, let me assure the committee, shall not deal with my ancestors, nor the antagonism of any hon. member from Ontario to the province of Quebec. This is purely a business proposition, and surely it is possible to approach it as such without endeavouring to stir up either political or religious animosi-

[Mr. Sevigny.]

ties. I think I know those parts of the country in which those railways are situated fairly well, and I know something about their history. I can appreciate the desire that the people have that they should have railway communication like people in the other parts of the country more favourably situated. I am not altogether blind to the fact that since the French settled on the northern bank of the St. Lawrence the winters have always been found tiresomely long, and the people have been more or less driven into isolation. If we were not at war, although the expenditure might be extravagant, I think I would be prepared to vote for the purchasing of those railways in the hope that they might give those people more adequate railway facilities. But, unfortunately, the country is at war, and our national resources are being taxed to their utmost, and, in my judgment, the financial resources of this country are going to be taxed more in the future than they have been in the past.

Only a year or two ago Lloyd George said that this war would be won as much by the "silver bullet" as by any other means. If that was true two years ago, it is obvious to us and to the world at large that it is equally true to-day. Putting that idea into commonplace expression, it simply means that that nation is likely to win the war which can stand the financial strain the longest and make the best resistance to the inroads on its financial standing. What is the standing of this country to-day? We started out borrowing \$100,000,000 and \$150,000,000, as the case might be, at a rate in the neighbourhood of 5½ per cent. The next loan did not sell quite so well. Lately we borrowed a few millions in New York at a cost of 6 or 7 per cent. If we are to believe what we see in the papers to-day—I speak only from that information—the next loan of \$100,000,000 will likely cost us 6 per cent. In other words, money is getting dearer; it is getting harder to get the money that is necessary to carry on the war. No one who has watched the situation can be blind to the fact that England's financial resources are being strained, and that we in Canada are being called upon to bear part of the burden that England would otherwise bear. Under these circumstances we are asked to spend \$4,000,000 in the purchase of what I consider to be unnecessary railways at this time. When last year I saw the confusion that arose in the arbitration before Mr. Justice Cassels, I rather hoped that we had heard the last