

able than when it came to the turn of the leader himself to speak, he rose and delivered a carefully prepared speech, and after having spoken the better part of three hours, he sat down without moving an amendment. The farthest he would go, the most he would dare, was simply to throw out as a feeler some suggestions or ideas, not by way of affirmation, but like the legs of a spider spreading in all directions, but against which immediately some of his followers commenced to kick most vigorously. During those three weeks we had words in abundance, torrents of eloquence, speeches in endless streams; but to those speeches there was no conclusion, and the words were wholly negative. But at last, after the opposition had been taunted in a most admirable speech by my hon. friend the Minister of Customs (Hon. Mr. Paterson) at having no policy to offer but simply indulging in negative criticism, the speech of the hon. member for Toronto was interrupted in order that notice might be given to us of the tenor of an amendment which should be moved by the hon. leader of the opposition, who was unfortunately absent at that time—not on the third reading of the Bill, but on the concurrence of the resolutions. At last we have that amendment. Let us compare it with the speech of my hon. friend. In the speech which he delivered some time ago he was most precise as to his policy. It was genuine, we understood what it meant. First of all, it meant an extension of the Intercolonial Railway from Montreal to the shores of the Georgian bay. This was a counter proposition which everybody could understand. Next his proposition was to buy the section of the Canadian Pacific Railway from North Bay station to Fort William. This also was a specific undertaking which everybody could understand. If that proposition, which was advocated and defended with great eloquence, were embodied in this resolution, we could understand it; we would have a line of cleavage. But what is the tenor of the resolution of my hon. friend? He has contended that the Intercolonial Railway should be extended to the shores of the Georgian bay; but this is not what he says in the resolution. In the resolution he says this:

That the Intercolonial Railway and the Prince Edward Island Railway should continue to be owned and operated by the government of Canada.

Well, who has put that in issue? Who has heard in this debate of any proposal to sell the Intercolonial Railway to anybody? And what is the reason for affirming that the Intercolonial Railway must continue to be owned and operated by the government? Then, he says:

That the government system of railways should be developed and improved in the province of Quebec and in the maritime provinces, and should also be extended from Montreal westward to such point or points as will enable

it to transport to eastern Canada and to our national ports on the St. Lawrence and on the Atlantic the rapidly increasing products of our great western country.

There is not a word here to the effect that this should be done by the acquisition of the Canada Atlantic Railway. This is what the government propose to do—to extend our railway communication westward, so as to bring the trade of the western country to the St. Lawrence and to our maritime ports. But my hon. friend is a wily politician. He wants to give just enough to his followers to enable them to say: See where we are; we are in favour of developing the trade of the country and bringing it to our eastern ports; but we do not want to commit ourselves; we speak, but we do not work and do not act. My hon. friend will pardon me if I say that he reminds me of the old fable—I say it without offence—of the bat who one day fell among the birds, and said, 'I am one of yourselves—look at my wings,' and the next day he found himself among the rats, and said, 'I am one of yourselves—look at my claws.' When my hon. friend asks his followers to declare themselves, he is rather chary. He is careful to keep to generalities for which all can vote but on which no one need commit himself to anything in particular. But since my hon. friend has today devoted a great deal of energy and time to a discussion of the policy which he will not dare to put in the form of an amendment, perhaps it will not be amiss if we give some examination to what he calls his policy. And I may say to my hon. friend that I shall be much surprised if, when we come to examine what he so complacently calls his policy, the country does not come to the conclusion that it is not practicable and will not bear criticism.

Let me come to the question of the acquisition of the Canada Atlantic Railway as an extension of the Intercolonial to the shores of the Georgian bay. There is a gap between the terminus of the Intercolonial Railway at Montreal and the commencement of the Canada Atlantic Railway at Coteau. How does my hon. friend propose to fill that gap? He has gone deeply into the subject, and that point has not escaped him. He has given us a plan, and what is that plan? That having acquired the Canada Atlantic Railway from the shores of Georgian bay, not to Coteau, but to somewhere in the state of Vermont, we should build an extension of the Intercolonial from Jacques Cartier Junction to Coteau. But my hon. friend seems to forget that at this moment between Montreal and Coteau there are already two lines of railway—one built by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the other built several years before by the Grand Trunk Railway; and that between these two lines, for three-fourths of their length, there is not a distance of more than half a mile. They run within sight of each other, and any