

the privileges which we enjoy to an irresponsible Railway Board of some five or six men who never entered upon an important undertaking in their lives and allowing them to spend the public money of Canada freely, irrespective of the voice of the people, and particularly of the Parliament of Canada.

That is the great question involved in this Bill to-day and I am astonished that my honourable friend does not recognize it. In the first place, my honourable friend has said that the Government has given a free hand to the Canadian National Railway Board. That Board has said to this Government. "We want sufficient authority to issue certificates to build the roads which are shown in the schedule. "But if that authority be given to them, the same authority will be given to duplicate this mileage, and the Government of the day, with a docility which would do justice to the most docile animal we know, have brought in legislation permitting this particular Board, according to their own sweet will, to enter upon the construction of over a thousand miles of railway, and to spend the \$100,000,000—because I am satisfied it will cost that much—of the public money of Canada, entirely irrespective of the voice of Parliament. We are asked to consider favourably this Bill, and to go into Committee and select our road.

Now, honourable gentlemen, has Parliament ever presented to the public of Canada such a spectacle as this which we behold, not only in the invitation which has been given us, but in the Bill which is now before us—that each member is to select his road, and the National Railway Board will go on and build it?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: With the consent of the majority of this Chamber.

Hon. Mr. FOWLER: You pay your money and takes your choice.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Of course, each of us can have his road. There is a little bit of road I would like myself; it is not on the schedule, but we can add it to the schedule, and I will have the Senate approve of it, and we will go on with its construction.

Now, up to a short time ago my honourable friends were not in sympathy with the nationalization of railways. In the last general election, which we can recall very well, my honourable friends particularly expressed their disapproval of the policy adopted by the late Government in assuming the responsibility of operating the Canadian National system. I say this is in all seriousness, that

if these honourable gentlemen wanted to conceive a plan by which they could destroy the confidence of the Canadian people in the operation of this great system of railways, they could not have placed in print and on paper a more successful scheme than that which is before us. Here is a scheme by which securities may be issued entirely irrespective of Parliament, to cover all the deficits of that road. Here is a scheme by which the operations, no matter how diabolical they may be, can be obscured and hidden entirely from Parliament. Securities may be issued ad libitum so long as the National Railway Board and the Government of Canada—not the Parliament of Canada—stand in together. In view of the declaration which has been made by my honourable friend, that the Government is prepared to accept all that the Board recommends—because I am using his own language—we can readily understand that that means the abdication of the Government of Canada, and the handing over to this Board of the judgment which is to be exercised as to the operation of the Canadian National system and the expenditure of whatsoever money they require.

Now, honourable gentlemen, do we know these gentlemen long enough? Are we sufficiently familiar with their abilities to step into the position at present occupied by the Government and Parliament of Canada and take control of the public funds of Canada for this purpose? From our present experience and observation we know of no institution that can absorb funds so quickly as the railways of Canada. I for one, no matter what the invitation of my honourable friend would be to select our branch and have it proceeded with, would not accept any such invitation on the strength of the bill before us.

If the Government of Canada were really sincere on this subject they would follow the parliamentary practice which has been faithfully observed from the time of Confederation down to the present. They would place in the Estimates the particular appropriation which may be required for a particular road or group of roads, because Parliament has been more than generous in voting money to this Board. Parliament this Session voted a lump sum of \$73,000,000. But that is not sufficient, honourable gentlemen—why? Because it means that the Canadian National Railways would have to report annually, and the Government would have to report annually to Parliament, and this would neces-