

likewise. I heartily commend, and I feel certain that the country also heartily commends, the answer of the Prime Minister that parliament must first be consulted. Had he done otherwise he would have offended not only what we think is the well-established principle of responsible government, but also the very spirit of the League of Nations. Because the League of Nations, to which Canada is a party, did not make the extravagant promise that of its own volition it could bring about the end of war. One of its cardinal policies is that when war threatens the League shall ask the contending powers to pause, to wait, to ponder, to weigh and discuss the merits and demerits of the question at issue to see if there is not an honourable way out. It would have been the very reverse of that salutary treatment of dangerous international disputes if, without summoning parliament at all, the Prime Minister had committed Canada to war with the haste and through the agency of a mere telegram.

There is naturally mention of the fact that we have a new board of directors of our National Railway System, and that as soon as possible there is to be a complete amalgamation of the Grand Trunk with the other units of the system. Down in Nova Scotia—and it will occasion no bitterness now if I give it as an historic fact—the arms of Confederation were suddenly thrown around us although we had never consented to any such approach, and naturally we felt an intense shock because we are a modest people. Now, this immense increase of government railway ownership from approximately 2,000 miles to 22,000 miles was also wished upon the Maritimes without their consent in any shape or form, and Nova Scotia in particular unanimously pronounced against that action at the very first opportunity. But, Mr. Speaker though the people of my province believe that both those bargains were very bad for them economically, as good and loyal Canadians they are disposed now to make the best of those bad bargains, and consequently they expect to see government railway ownership have a fair trial. Under this new Board, working in conjunction as far as the law and the circumstances will permit with the government, I have faith that our National Railways will get a fair trial under government ownership.

We in the Maritime provinces have waited long for what we believe are our just rights, and in stating this I will not thank any hon. gentleman to tell me that I am trenching upon ground that is sectional. I suppose that in Russia, to proclaim a wrong and seek re-

dress would be considered sectional, and the reformer might be given short shrift before a firing squad; but in Canada to seek redress of a wrong suffered in any quarter must never be considered sectional.

Mr. HANSON: Will the hon. gentleman permit me a question? I should like to ask him where he stands with reference to the inclusion of the Intercolonial railway in the National Railway system, having regard to his own specific declarations in the Halifax Herald during the autumn of 1921.

Mr. PUTNAM: I beg to inform my hon. friend that I stood precisely where the Minister of Public Works in the last administration, Mr. McCurdy, stood during the election in my county. His election manifesto said: Give us back the Intercolonial Headquarters at Moncton. I have told my hon. friend that on the question of railway amalgamation, just as on the question of Confederation, I do not propose to walk with aimless feet, whatever his own attitude may be. I have told him, and I do not see why now he asks the question, that we propose to make the very best of a bad bargain, just as Joseph Howe did with Confederation.

Mr. HANSON: Thank you.

Mr. PUTNAM: Two statements, Mr. Speaker, made recently by the president of the new Canadian National Railway board, Sir Henry Thornton, have my utmost approval. Speaking at Halifax, he said he had heard during the course of his visit to that part of the country that there was an honourable understanding under which, as a condition of the Maritime provinces entering the confederation, such railway rates would prevail and such railway treatment would be accorded to us as would not interfere with the legitimate flow of trade between those provinces and the more westerly parts of Canada. Sir Henry said—and it is a long time since we have had such a specific promise from so authoritative a source—that in the formulating of his railway policy that contention would be examined upon its merits. For the present, Mr. Speaker, that is all I want; I believe that if the contention is examined into and decided upon its merits, there are better days in store for the people of the Maritime provinces.

Sir Henry Thornton also stated publicly in the city of Moncton that the railway employee need not fear that the wages paid to him in the future would not be sufficient to enable him, without undue worry and anxiety, to support his family and to attain