

stock. The hon. gentleman cannot trust the Government of Canada to appoint an arbitrator, because he thinks we will help Mackenzie and Mann. Did we help Mackenzie and Mann when we appointed the commission whose report my hon. friend lauded this afternoon? Did we confer with them and appoint men that we knew would bring in a report to their advantage when we appointed Sir Henry Drayton, Mr. Acworth and Mr. Smith? The hon. gentleman says that these are the best men we could have selected. Why should we select good men as commissioners and poor men as arbitrators. I have no doubt at all that if in this resolution we had proposed that the matter be left to the Exchequer Court, the hon. gentleman would have said: Why did you not do what I told you in 1914 and what the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Pugsley) himself reaffirmed in 1916? The hon. member for St. John last year referred back to this resolution and said: That was the step to take then as well as the step to take to-day. How is it that my hon. friend's view changes so quickly when we take that step? What would suit the member for Welland? (Mr. German) Immediately we follow his advice, he says that is the worst advice we could follow. He asks the Government to assume that when he advises the Government he does not mean what he says; indeed, does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. CARVELL: I have listened this afternoon with a good deal of interest to the remarks of the member for Welland (Mr. German), as I always do, and also to what the Solicitor General (Mr. Meighen) has said. Really I do not know what the Solicitor General is driving at.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The member for Welland.

Mr. CARVELL: Then my hon. friend's aim was very poor. He failed both to reach his mark and to make it clear what he was aiming at. Every man in the committee is entitled to have views of his own, and he ought not to be kicked around too badly if he expresses them. Anyway, I am going to take the responsibility of giving some of my views on this question. First, I may say that I cannot agree with the Government; neither can I agree with the member for Welland. I do not believe that any member of Parliament ought to be asked to vote for a proposal which he thinks is unsound, simply because the juggernaut is going and public opinion is such

[Mr. Meighen.]

that it ought not to be withstood. My opinion has always been that if a man has opinions of his own, he had better assert them and try afterwards to convince the public that he is right. If he is not right, then he can let the public do what they have a mind to do about it. That may be a very independent attitude, but I have always taken that view.

I do not believe in public ownership of any kind. I do object to the Government going as far as they are going in respect to the proposed ownership of the Canadian Northern railway system. The Minister of Finance stated that it was the intention to appoint a commission that should be subject to Parliament, not to the Government. Well, if the Government can do that, it is a wonderful step in the right direction. But no man who has lived in the Maritime Provinces all his life as I have done can honestly say that he is in favour of the public ownership of railways. I know that in Ontario there is a fetish in respect of public ownership; men are worshipping the public ownership of everything. But it will not be many years before they come back to sound business principles. We had an illustration of that in the House the other evening. In Ontario they have had public ownership of utilities in the way of electrical energy—the greatest administration of electrical energy which the world has known. There is no doubt that the Hydro-Electric Commission of Ontario has done wonderful work. But they are commencing to get up against the wall. The Minister of Railways (Mr. Cochrane) was compelled to call upon his supporters to vote for an amendment to the general Railway Act of Canada absolutely to put out of existence a competitor to the Hydro-Electric because it stood in the way of this juggernaut. You would not find a better illustration in the records of Canada, from Confederation down to the present time, of the failure of public ownership.

Mr. COCHRANE: That is hardly a fair statement. The reason why the Conservatives voted as they did on that point was stated in the committee when that company was getting its rights from this Government. It was that the rights of the municipality in certain streets should be protected. Sir Edmund Osler asked to have this amendment put in, and he was told by the minister and by the lawyer who was putting the matter through, that it was put in.