

taken out. The forest conditions in that part of the country are far more vast and extensive than are to be found in the interior of New Brunswick. As regard the fishing industry to which the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. McIsaac) has referred so ably, I know of no part of eastern Canada where natural conditions are so generously provided as in that territory.

The question is whether this proposition, ratified and approved by all men of all political parties in our province who know the situation at first hand, shall be approved or not. We have the recommendations of Sir Henry Thornton and of the previous Canadian National board; we have the ratification of both political parties and of all governments since 1910 in this House. If any difficulty is to be found with a project of that kind, then I would like to know what proposition can be submitted to this committee with confidence by this government.

Mr. BAXTER: I have just one difficulty in trying to make up my mind at all about this subject. We have been treated this afternoon to the reading, in a somewhat low tone of voice by the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Graham), of some ancient excerpts from Hansard.

Mr. GRAHAM: Not a low tone of voice.

Mr. BAXTER: Well, with loud noises round about. I just heard the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) say that this House should pay great reverence to the railway opinion of Sir Robert Borden and Colonel Thomas Cantley.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): And both railway boards.

Mr. BAXTER: I will come to that; it is the important part of the matter, but I want to be allowed to browse along the pathway for a while before I reach the point. I will get there before I am through, and in my judgment no one has done so this afternoon who has advocated the measure.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): Do not be so certain that you will get there.

Mr. BAXTER: I am neither opposing nor supporting this proposal, but I want to take a few minutes to show how, in my opinion, these things ought to be approached. The National Railway Board has been constituted with the idea of standing entirely outside of politics and managing the railways, if they can be so managed, as a business proposition,

[Mr. E. M. Macdonald.]

utterly, absolutely and entirely divorced from political interference. I wonder whether there is any dissent in this chamber to that view.

Mr. GRAHAM: The leader of the Progressive party dissented the other day.

Mr. BAXTER: If that view is accepted, why in the world should we be appealed to in address after address to take this or the other recommendation because forsooth some gentleman who is referred to, simply because of his politics, has advocated it at some time in the past or more tolerably near the present day? What difference in the world does it make to me whether Sir Robert Borden, coming from Nova Scotia, would have liked, at some time before the war when money was more plentiful, to see a road built in some part of his own province? Had I been in the House at that time I too should have wanted a road built in my province, and I should have felt that the country in those days could afford to be liberal and might almost undertake experiments in the matter of railways. But I do not feel so to-day; and with all respect for the statements of Sir Robert Borden, I think that the gentlemen who so freely quote him should give him credit, if he were here, for having a different outlook upon the financial situation of the country from that which he had so many years ago when he advocated this and perhaps other expenditures. I am not against the building of this road, and I am distinctly not for it; I am merely trying to reach a principle which I think should underlie the construction of all these lines. First of all, let us discard the musty Hansards. If you build a line and it does not turn out according to expectation, the question seems to be, can you hang Hansard somewhere? What is the sense of it? Can you reach the men who are reported therein and punish them in any way for what might have been mistakes? And sometimes they were not mistakes, because most of those who spoke were simply putting forward the things they desired to see done and were not perhaps over careful about the evidence that lay behind. We are referred to Colonel Cantley. Colonel Cantley seems to have almost annoyed the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) by opposing him as a candidate.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): I was glad he did.

Mr. BAXTER: Then it is a case of joy. But if Colonel Cantley was no more reliable in the addresses he made with regard to the railway than the Minister of National Defence was in regard to the promises he made in that election, then I am afraid I should not