

them since three o'clock yesterday afternoon. I must confess to being astonished at the feeling displayed by the Acting Prime Minister in this discussion. It seems scandalous to me that he should hurl insinuations across the floor and impute motives to His Majesty's loyal Opposition. I personally resent treatment of that kind and I decline to allow him or any one else to impugn my motives in the position that I intend to take in regard to this matter. I must state that from my experience of the Acting Prime Minister I had formed a different estimate of him, and in regard to matters of this kind expected different treatment at his hands. I condemn his unwarranted display of temper and resent it with all the force I can.

I claim that in the matter of loyalty, speaking for myself at least, I take second place to no representative in this House, not even the Acting Prime Minister. In my judgment the discussion to-night is not, as insisted upon by the Acting Prime Minister, a question of public ownership versus private ownership. The attitude assumed by members on this side of the House is an altogether different one. We have no objection whatever to the passing of this Bill, but we certainly insist on our rights in discussing the different clauses stage by stage. One thing that does impress me very forcibly is the fact that we are voting away the powers of the representatives of the people, we are delegating those powers to another body, a body that will be a law unto itself, and the representatives of the people will have absolutely no control over it. I object to this attempt at railway overlapping, overbuilding and financial waste. Although these words were used to-night by the Acting Prime Minister, who went into the subject very extensively, we are being asked to pass a blanket order for the building of forty-four lines of railroad. We have no information from the Government as to the length of those railroads or where they are to be located. We were told by the Acting Minister of Justice this afternoon that all of them were in course of construction with one exception. To my mind that is an extensive proposition for this country to undertake at the present time considering our financial condition, for, as has been stated over and over again, our public debt already amounts to the enormous sum of two billion dollars. If we continue spending money at this rate I cannot see that the prospects of this country are any too bright. We have amongst these

[Mr. Pedlow.]

railroads, the halt, the lame and the blind, and we have no exact information regarding any one of them. I understand that there is an extensive tract of real estate alongside these railroads in the possession of some person or persons, of whom we have no knowledge, and I would ask the Minister of Railways for some exact information on this subject before I can deal with it intelligently. I would like to know who owns the townsites and lands adjoining these railroads that we are expected to vote on to-night without the slightest definite information.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. BUREAU: No; the hon. member is asking a question.

Mr. McKENZIE: Is the minister going to answer it?

Mr. J. D. REID: I am not going to answer it.

Mr. PEDLOW: The Minister of Railways refuses to answer a straight question. I would have expected that in order to place hon. members in a position to vote intelligently to-night this information at least would be forthcoming. We want to know who is behind this scheme. We have found so often a nigger in the fence in matters of this kind that we want to locate him. We have been told what a splendid brand of progressive Liberalism there is to the right of the Chairman. If that is the estimate of the Acting Prime Minister of progressive Liberalism we hope it will stay there; but in my judgment it is the kind of Liberalism that is walking backward. During the speech of the Acting Prime Minister the Government supporters were very active—more active than I have seen them yet during this debate, for generally they have sat silent and have made no suggestions of a constructive nature or otherwise in respect to a problem that means so much to this country. It is claimed that it is patriotic for hon. members to support this proposition without question; that is practically the statement of the Acting Prime Minister. To my mind it is rather an unconditional surrender to this new directorate of the rights and privileges of Parliament. I for one object to endorsing any such proposition. Now, Sir, in concluding I would like again to ask the Minister of Railways for the information I have already requested from him, so that we will be able to deal with the subject more intelligently.