

casation which he mentioned in his speech. It left an ineradicable impression upon his mind, fatal to all ideas of government ownership, fatal to any progress in that direction. It is enormously regrettable, because that impression cannot be removed.

No amount of argument, no amount of reason, no amount of experience, could possibly lift from my hon. friend's mind the load of conviction that was brought to him by the visit on the occasion referred to. I know that some former colleagues of mine were not a bit more friendly to government ownership than he was; whether it was owing to a visit to Depot Harbour I am not at all clear, but I am not yet content to accept that explanation as to their attitude upon the question of government ownership. The impression that has been created upon my own mind is that they had made this question of the Intercolonial Railway so much a battledore and shuttlecock business between political parties in former times when they were on the other side of the House that they have become filled absolutely full of prejudice and it is impossible to enlighten them or remove this prejudice. If they wanted to do something which would give evidence of a response to the national aspirations they would have gone to Georgian Bay and they would have found the great body of public opinion that would have justified and supported them in going there with the government railway. The opinion is that business can be brought from the western country by the lake route and down over the Intercolonial Railway which will never, perhaps, be brought by any other possible route that may be constructed in the country. When the Intercolonial Railway was extended to Montreal, I felt that that would be the next move that we would make. I felt that it would be a proper step to take. I have been four or five years struggling valiantly in order to achieve some success in that direction. The move will be taken though. Other views which are more potent, than mine have been will prevail upon the government, and it will adopt the policy because it has virtue in it, and it has hope in it, and it must become a means of realizing the national idea of using our own ports winter and summer for the carriage of the products of our own country. I am not going to undertake to enter, on this occasion, upon any elaborate justification of the policy of government ownership. I have, on many occasions, when I have been addressing the House in reference to my railway estimates, taken the opportunity of pointing the mind a little in that direction, and I have adduced arguments which, while not being put forward at the time as arguments in favour of government ownership, may have influenced the creation of a sentiment in favour of such a policy and I claim that whether it be due to any word that I ever uttered or to other causes,

there has been a marked, strong, rapid growth of public opinion in favour of the extension of the policy of government ownership in Canada. I do not say that the government should own every railway. I do not say that the government should take up every railway enterprise which is proposed, but I do say that the government might very wisely own a trunk line here and a trunk line there, because it gives advantages to the people who use these lines and who use other lines, which they can never have in any other way.

The experience of the Intercolonial Railway, I think, so far from being an evidence that such a policy is an unwise and unsafe one and one which cannot be judiciously adopted by the government is directly and positively the other way, and I am only too sorry that so small a portion of our friends on this side of the House, and so small a portion of hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House agree with me in that view. Then, I will say that if our friends had been anxious to hear what the people of the western country had to say and what their wishes were in reference to this railway they would have heard that no policy would commend itself to their judgment so heartily or so unquestionably as the policy which will ensure the construction of a railway through the western country which shall be owned and operated by the government. Now, we have been told a good deal by my right hon. friend in regard to the disadvantages of the Intercolonial Railway by reason of its circuitous route, and what the right hon. gentleman said in that respect is absolutely correct. He said what I have said over and over again in explanation of why better financial results had not been accomplished over the road, but because it is a fact in respect to the Intercolonial Railway it does not follow that it should continue to be a fact in respect to any extensions which take place, because, in my view, the more territory you extend the road into which shall be productive, the better it will be for the Intercolonial Railway and the more it will equalize and bring up the general results. When you talk about building a road through the central part of the province of New Brunswick in order that you might get a cheaper and better route than the Intercolonial Railway, I point to the experience of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which crosses the state of Maine. What is the fact? The Intercolonial Railway has had a contest with the Canadian Pacific Railway—a contest in one sense—at all events, a test between the two roads has taken place. When did it take place and with what results? It took place last year when the Canadian Pacific Railway was barred, in consequence of the embargo laid upon cattle, from carrying cattle through the state of Maine. We were called upon on the Intercolonial Railway to carry these