

were no insurance companies strong enough to insure their cargoes and hulls. The Government stepped in and insured them, and thus did a great service for the nation and the Allies, and it made a handsome profit out of the business. I asked the Government the other night whether they could tell me if the Government of Great Britain paid the premiums into the Consolidated Fund, but I have had no answer.

Now, we on this side of the House are prepared to give this government ownership plan, as outlined by this Bill, a fair field. We wish to see it succeed. We would have no patriotic feelings in our bosoms if we did not entertain that wish, because I do not know what will be the financial future of this country if this plan does not succeed. But what I do say is that the Government, with all the difficulties inherent in the situation, and in the light of recent experiments in public ownership, not only on this side of the Atlantic, but on the other, would be well advised to follow the sage and experienced counsel given to them by the hon. member for Shelburne and Queens.

Mr. F. S. SCOTT (Waterloo South): I come from a part of the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker, where a great majority of the people believe in the principle of public ownership, and believing as I do also in the principle, I am particularly concerned that at this time we should in discussing this measure come to a proper conclusion regarding it.

It is of the greatest possible importance that public ownership should be started on a proper basis. I have been a member of this House for some years, and I confess that from the first time that I came into the House, as I listened to the discussion of the Estimates of the Intercolonial Railway, my thought was that never could the Intercolonial Railway be carried along successfully by the method then followed. It seems to me that the first thing Parliament has to learn in connection with the public ownership of railways is that Parliament knows nothing at all about railway operation; that the running of railways should be delegated to some other body. If we were to go to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and say that they should submit their budget for each financial year to a body such as this, they would say that the idea was the height of the ridiculous. They would say that they could not hope to make a success of the Canadian Pacific railway by the

adoption of such methods as have been employed by the Dominion in past years.

The amendment introduced this afternoon suggests that in the Bill which has been brought down, Parliament is taking a most radical step; that Parliament is making a departure from anything before attempted in this country, and that it is a move in the wrong direction. With that contention I most emphatically disagree. I believe that the only way in which this great undertaking can be successfully carried on is by the method adopted under this Bill. The principle may be a new one to this Parliament. We have had a very clear description of what has governed in these matters in the Motherland. However, the principle adopted by this Bill has been carried out in connection with provincial and municipal finances. While in the past it has been the governing principle that all revenue received by a municipal council shall be under the control of and shall be spent by that municipal council, nevertheless, in Ontario and throughout the Canadian West, where we have had considerable experience with public ownership, it has been found that public undertakings cannot be carried along on the old-fashioned lines. The municipal councils of Ontario and the West have adopted the very principle embodied in this Bill. They have appointed commissions in connection with their waterworks plants, their electric plants, and so on; and these public works are being administered just as it is proposed to administer this great public railway system.

If the member for Shelburne and Queens (Mr. Fielding) had stood up in the Legislature of Ontario fifteen or eighteen years ago and made the speech that he made in this House this afternoon, no doubt he would have received applause from both sides of the House. But conditions have changed in this country. The Ontario Legislature found that they could not carry along that great public undertaking, the hydro-electric movement, by the old methods. What did they do? They did just what the Government propose to do in this case; they placed the thing under the control of a commission. What does that commission do? Does it come to the Legislature? Do members on both sides of the legislature discuss, pro and con, all the different works and activities proposed to be entered upon by the Hydro-Electric Commission? No; this commission goes on with its work of administration, just as the directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company do in connection with