

organisations are generally profitable only because they stimulate trade themselves. They have their steamers, their warehouses, their commercial firms; they build up their own freight, when the public do not give them enough; they have to defend themselves against such cut-throat schemes as are organised against them, or to organise some such themselves. How can you expect a Government to become a trader, ship owner, manufacturer, miller, stock jobber, bull or bear on the money market, destroyer, if need be, and an implacable rival of the people under their jurisdiction? It would give rise to ceaseless accusations of favoritism or injustice. Should their tariff be regulated by those of other companies, a cry of monopoly would follow; if they reduced them, it would become a disloyal competition. Were they fixed permanently, the trade so delicately influenced by the supply and demand, by over-production or scarcity, would not really find its proper level. At times they would be too high, at others too low. In a word, you would have destroyed what is the greatest strength of a nation—the individual initiative; you would have subordinated the intelligence of the business man, so quick and so flexible, to the theories of the political man groping among experiments on economy, without knowing the value of audacity and a spirit of enterprise, which, for individuals, are worth dollars and cents. Traffic would be guided according to local instead of commercial views; no force in the world can counterbalance political laws, which are the same everywhere; therefore, English ideas do not favor the working of a railway by the Government. The Intercolonial is an exception imposed upon us by circumstances. But such a state of things cannot exist as far as the Canadian Pacific is concerned, this line being necessarily always fighting and competing with others for existence. At the time of the enquiry made by the English Parliament in Great Britain, in 1867, on the opportunity for the acquisition of the railways by the State, public opinion was unanimously against the scheme, and in quoting a few sentences of the report resuming the evidence, I establish, without any doubt, the theory I am now trying to develop. This report is found in the 38th and 39th volumes of the Sessional Papers of the House of Commons of 1867. We read:

"We have next to consider, if the State owned the railways, if it would be able to improve the system of management. None of the witnesses have recommended direct management by Government officers, but in the opinion of some, great advantage would be derived from the adoption of a plan of leasing the railways in groups." Pap. xxxv., Report 1867, vol. 38, p. 12.

"The practical result of any scheme for the national purchase and leasing of railways would be merely to substitute the lesser sense of responsibility of a lessee for a limited period, administering the property of others for the heavier and more durable responsibilities of owners managing their own property." Pap. xxxvi.

"In France, the absence, almost complete, up to the present time, of all competition amongst railways, discard that valuable equilibrium which is the safeguard of British industry." Pap. xxxvii.

"The plan of direct management by the Government itself seems to meet with condemnation on all sides, the chief objections raised being the want of a direct interest, the want of thorough knowledge or peculiar aptitude, the habit of costly management, and the danger of abuse in patronage." Page 112, same Report.

The country, on different occasions, has expressed its opinion, and its decision has never varied. The Act of 1872, authorising the construction of the railway, declared positively that it should be constructed by a private company, and in order that no doubt should remain about the unanimous disposition of the country, when the Mackenzie Government came into power, in 1874, it entered afresh in our statutes this universal preference in favor of private companies. And even were the weighty considerations which I have just pointed out not in existence, there still remains another, and the most important one, as it affects the relations of parties with politics. I ask what a storm would be let loose in this House if it were asked at this moment, Mr. Speaker, to invest us with the property of the

Pacific Railway and the millions of patronage which it implies. With what terror would we not see the Opposition contemplate the fact that all the resources of the Pacific would lay in our hands. It would be then that all the philippics, all the violent denunciations of past and present days, would wake all the echoes of this Chamber, and no eloquence would be found expressive enough to invoke upon us the wrath of electors. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, if we had lived for the love of power, we could have armed ourselves with this invincible weapon; but before thinking of the sweets of power, we must consider the duties which devolve upon it, and we must not sow dissensions in the political world. We want a frank, open and loyal contest, free from the elements as well as the appearances of undue influence. Now, it is my duty to again ask this House to pardon me for having occupied its time so long in making the remarks I thought it my duty to make on this important question. It is not very often that I trespass upon the good will and patience of hon. members, and it is on this plea that I ask to be forgiven. I have, I think, proved that it was right for the Government to have done what they did last year; I think I have demonstrated by the facts I have put before this House that it was right for the Government to come to the assistance of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the manner provided for in these resolutions, not by giving the money but by assisting their credit in the money markets of the world. We have not to deal with a company who have proved they are a company of jobbers, of mere contractors, but with a company who, as the whole country knows, have shown that their intention is, not to make money out of the contract, but out of the returns to be obtained from the great railway they have built. I hope that we shall have the support of my hon. friends even on the other side. We anticipate criticism; we know we shall have criticism; it is right, perhaps, that there should be criticism; it is right that the acts of the Government should be scrutinised; but, in this matter, the Government has acted honestly, frankly, with the sole and the pure object, not of putting the finances of the country in a more difficult position than they were before, but of insuring the credit of the company to whose existence and success the credit of the whole country is so closely united. I know that fault will be found with our conduct, but there is one hope which I must express before taking my seat, and I shall, in this, for a moment, be a lecturer in favor of American institutions, of the American people, and of the sentiment which prevails in the United States. Let us unite at least in one sentiment, and that is, not to defame our country, not to decry our credit, not to try to put down our institutions or to pull down those things which we have built up, which are noble works, which are grand works, which, in the future, will redound to the credit, not only of Governments—because what have Governments to do with that?—but of the whole country. I do not object to the hon. gentlemen criticising our conduct. I would not object even to see the hon. gentlemen coming to this side of House and taking the places we occupy at this moment. I, for one, would be ready to give my place up to those hon. gentlemen. Those who have had experience know that it is not for the pleasure we have in being in the Ministry that we desire to remain here; it is certainly not worth as much as the people are led to believe; and I would give my seat up to my hon. friends, and my colleagues in the Cabinet, I am sure, would willingly give up their seats, if they could only think that the hon. gentlemen who would take our places would be imbued with a greater spirit of patriotism. If we are not to have our friends on the other side coming to the rescue, not of the Government—we do not want that—but of the credit of the country, if we are obliged to say that they are always trying to defame the good name of the country, instead of upholding its honor, they may rest assured that they will not, by