

for us in the scheme of Confederation reduced largely to atrophy. I had long ago resolved to remove from my own mind every constraint that would impede me in the exercise of my soundest judgment as to how best to treat this great business problem; but I am sorry to say I find this session in the conduct of the honourable leader (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) with respect to this question the intervention of other than business considerations and of regard for matters for which we were never intended to have regard. He has almost a unanimous following in support of the position taken by his party. Possibly I should not have ground for such complaint were it not that the past conduct of himself and of those who now speak with him shows they really have not reasoned about this subject in other days as they now do; that the principles which bind them to-day did not bind them but a very short time ago.

Fourteen years have passed since a committee of this House unanimously declared itself in favour of unified management of the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific railways. It is true that the financial terms then recommended would not now be considered by us, but the Senate favoured the principle of unified operation. And it is only six years since the basis of the Senate's resolution of 1925 was again wholly approved by the honourable gentleman who now leads the House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand)—

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: And repudiated by my right honourable friend.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: It is only six years since he said that while in his judgment some good might result from the measure then under consideration, he apprehended we should have to return to the principle of unified management at no distant date. At that time he read a list of advantages which would accrue if we did return to that principle. All this he repudiates now. He says to me, across the floor, that six years ago I did not favour unification, but supported the bill then before us. That is true. The whole railway question had been inquired into by a commission in which, in common with the whole country, I had entire confidence. That commission had made specific and clear recommendations. Manifestly in the state of public opinion at that time the best that could be done was to give those recommendations a fair opportunity to produce relief. However one might have felt about the prospect—and I myself had hopes that much more would be attained than has been—it was certain that in the face of the commission's report there was nothing further we could do than we did. I stated to Parliament

repeatedly that we could do nothing but try to give effect to those recommendations and see what would result. I pointed out that in the case of great businesses between which there was severest competition beneficial effects had been obtained from co-operation on a limited scale, and I expressed my belief that in the railway field there was a sphere within which co-operation could be made to produce desirable results, even while competition existed.

Well, we have had six years of this so-called co-operation, but the results achieved would not fill the hollow of our hands. Both railways have explained why more co-operative measures have not been put into effect. But the honourable leader of the House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) refuses to accept the explanation, or to be guided by the result. He tells us he is against unified management on principle, and he calls upon his followers to vote it down.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: My right honourable friend is wrong. I do not ask anyone to follow me, and I have called no caucus.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not think it is hard for any of us to hear the call, even though it is not addressed to us. Results speak for themselves. The honourable leader of the Government has veered at a right angle from the course he took just a few years ago, and has avowed principles directly contrary to those which he twice commended to this House.

The main reason why participation in this debate gives me no pleasure is this. I find myself in direct and definite conflict with the avowed platform of the party with which I have been associated through life and which once I led, and with the leader of that party, a man whose talents I admire and for whose personality I have affection. Performance of my duty in these circumstances, with no organized body of public opinion anywhere, in support, certainly cannot carry with it any great pleasure. I had hoped that others on both sides of the House could consider this matter from its business aspects alone, and thus enable the Senate to show this country that we were seeking to serve rather than to follow.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: In that I have been disappointed. I proclaim now that my words represent my own views and those of the eight other members of the committee who signed the alternative report recommended by my honourable friend from Montarville (Hon. Mr. Beaubien), and of any other honourable members who may vote with me.