

tween Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann and the Government. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Canada are not grateful to Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann for their railroad operations in this country? We find them feeling, rightly or wrongly, that the level of public life has not been raised, but rather debased by the operations of those gentlemen.

The Acting Prime Minister took considerable time in defending the corporate form of this company which is to run our railways. The hon. member for Shelburne and Queens never attacked the corporate form—so all that argument was absolutely beside the point; the hon. member asked that the control of Parliament over the moneys of the people should be retained. The Acting Prime Minister made a comparison between the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian Northern Railway. He said that shareholders, widely distributed, gave the conduct of the Canadian Pacific Railway into the hands of the directors; and his argument was: Why, cannot the people of Canada give the conduct of the Canadian Northern Railway just as completely into the hands of those nominated by the shareholders of this company? There is only one answer to that argument, but it is a very complete answer—that the private owners of the shares of the Canadian Pacific Railway are dealing with their own property and have the right to name whom they will as their directors; while this Government is dealing, not with its own property, but with the property of the people of Canada. And we, sitting on this side of the House, at least, say that in dealing with the property of the people of Canada there shall be thrown around that dealing all the safeguards and protection that British traditions and British experience have shown to be wise and necessary.

Another argument advanced by the Acting Prime Minister was that it would save the duplication of auditing. I really think that that is not a serious argument. No one pretends that if the audit of this railroad is carried on by the officers of the Auditor General that another audit will have to be made by the railway company's officials. One audit should be sufficient.

My hon. friend the Acting Prime Minister also brought forward the fact that after a deficit occurs Parliament will have the right to appropriate moneys to meet it. That is quite right, that is left to us. It reminds me of what a Radical member once said in the British House of Commons. "The King generally talks about

'my army' and 'my navy'; but he always talks about 'the national debt'." And our friends, the directors of this railway company, may possibly talk about "our engines and our rolling stock"; but when the deficit comes it will be "the deficit of the people of Canada."

I now come to the least enthusiastic argument of the Acting Prime Minister. He said, "I believe,—I am not sure,—that the Hydro-Electric Commission of Ontario carries on its business as regards the Parliament of the province in the same way as we propose that this commission or company should carry on its business as regards the Parliament of Canada." I know how busy the Acting Prime Minister is. I spoke in the House the other night of the inhumanity of the Government of twenty-three members allowing him to do two men's work. But really when he comes to tell us what we should do in regard to perhaps the greatest national undertaking that this country has ever assumed, he should be able to give us better arguments than his beliefs; I think we should have accurate information.

Public ownership is a matter on which honest men equally informed may hold different opinions. We have before us the great public ownership scheme in which the Government has embarked, and it is necessary that every man whatsoever his preconceived notions on public ownership may be, give that scheme all his support. But let not the Government endeavour to make political capital out of the fact that there are some men on this side of the House who are not in favour of Government ownership. I believe if we counted heads we would find among the supporters of the Government just as many who are not enthusiastic for government ownership. Government ownership is a principle that I wish I could enthusiastically support, for it seems to me in theory to be right. The idea that a railway is in essence a monopoly, that it can only be successful if it is a monopoly, and that all monopolies should be owned or at least be controlled by the people, appeals to me. But I cannot overlook the facts before me. What are they? Government ownership was tried in the United States, and it ran up tremendous deficits; government ownership was also tried in Great Britain and it ran up tremendous deficits. I know that government ownership was a great success in regard to marine insurance in Great Britain. When the war broke out ships stood in harbour, they did not dare go out because there

[Mr. McMaster.]