

quarrel with the hon. gentleman for taking that attitude, because, after all, Canada is unfortunately so immense in area and so scattered in population that anyone who represents a constituency in this House is more or less controlled in his attitude upon any question by the feeling of his constituency upon that question. And I shall frankly admit most of those who have spoken, or who will speak perhaps, upon this question favourably to this project, are those who represent constituencies or sections of the country which will be to a certain extent benefited by it; and those who speak against the scheme will speak from an absolutely opposite standpoint.

One point that struck me as a little curious is that my hon. friends to my left are not quite as assiduous in their attendance in the House to-day on this question as they usually are. To do them justice, I believe they attend the House—and perhaps it is because most of them are new members—as a rule much more assiduously than any of the rest of us; but here is a question which I believe affects them more than it affects any other section of this House, is of more real interest to them than perhaps any other question that will be discussed in this House, or at least of as much importance, and yet a great many of them are not taking as much interest as usual, the reason being, I presume—and I am not saying it in any critical spirit at all—that they have not perhaps looked into the question as fully as they might have. It is a question that is of distinct interest to them, and I think I shall prove it before I am through. The very point I make about the fact that they are not taking quite as much interest in this is the reason I believe this discussion is a good discussion.

This is a question of importance, not only to my hon. friends to my left, but to the whole country. I regret that of my hon. friends among the Government supporters only two have spoken, neither of whom has supported the project, though the first speaker did not oppose it very strenuously, except by quoting from the report of the commission, and I venture to say that some of his quotations did not really offer any criticism upon the project. But last year I remember when this question was up before the House there were a number of hon. gentlemen who are now on the Government side who supported it very strenuously. None of them have spoken to-day. But I hope that if this subject comes up again some of them will put themselves on record as they did last year. In fact,

I am sure they will. Among those who supported it were the Minister of Railways (Mr. Kennedy), the Solicitor-General (Mr. McKenzie), the member for Quebec County (Mr. Lavigneur), the member for Stanstead (Mr. Baldwin), the member for Pontiac (Mr. Cahill), and the then member for West Lambton, who is now a senator. There were others, but those I have named I recall from a quick perusal of the names in Hansard of last year. I find that in the main these hon. gentlemen supported the proposal.

Mr. CAHILL: Let me correct the hon. member. I did not support this resolution last year; I supported the Georgian Bay canal scheme.

Mr. MANION: Well, I have not time to look into Hansard now, but I looked over the hon. gentleman's speech a few moments ago and I was quite sure that he supported the project. However, I may be wrong and I accept his correction. But it does not matter in any case. I do not remember the Georgian Bay canal having been discussed last year except in relation to this question, but, as I say, it is immaterial.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh. oh.

Mr. MANION: I did not mean that as an offence to the hon. member. It seems that his own friends wish to make it so.

Mr. McMASTER: Oh, no.

Mr. MANION: I was going to say that there are three questions to-day before the people which I believe are the most important problems that are engaging public attention. One of them is the tariff, upon which there are differences of opinion in various sections of the country. Next is the matter of immigration; and last of all, perhaps as important as the others, if indeed not more important, is the question of transportation, which embraces not only railways but also such questions as the one we are discussing to-day, namely, canals and waterways. I admit that if this project were carried out it would involve the expenditure of a large amount of money, and I am also aware that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) has made the statement, at least as reported in the press, that at the moment the Government is not in a position to consider this question. That, of course, does not say that at a future time they may not consider it, but I understood, from my interpretation of the press announcement, that that was the attitude of the Minister