

a Government having charge of such a work are such that, for these causes alone, it was considered advisable to get rid of the responsibility.—(Hansard, January 17th, 1881.)

Sir Charles Tupper expressed his views in Parliament, in a speech delivered in June, 1897, when he said:

I learned with infinite pleasure that the Government had abandoned the idea or intention of building this railway (the Crow's Nest Pass Railway) as a Government work. I am quite aware that a portion of the press giving a considerable support to the Opposition has put forward this policy of the construction of the road through the Crow's Nest Pass as a Government work. I confess that I was astounded to find that, with the evidence that we had before us on the result of the construction and operation of Government railways in Canada, a single intelligent man could be found in the House, or out of it, who was prepared to advocate such a policy in this case. Why, Sir, all we have to do is to look at the facts that we have before us. We have already solved, we have set at rest forever, in my judgment, in the mind of any reasonable or intelligent man, the question whether it is better for Canada to construct a railway and operate it as a Government work or by the aid of a private company. Sir, this country, from the necessity of the case—for it was made part of the compact of Confederation, and necessarily so—was obliged to undertake the construction of the Intercolonial Railway as a Government work. It was a matter of necessity. And what was the result? Any person who will take the trouble to look at page 650 and 651 of the Statistical Year Book of Canada will find the whole story told. We constructed a railway from the city of Halifax, a large, enterprising city with a great trade, offering the finest harbor on the continent of America as a means of communication for the ocean trade. We carried that railway to St. John, another fine harbor, another large town, and, I may be permitted to say, of still greater energy and enterprise than Halifax, and there were reasons for that. But, Sir, we have then run this line of railway through an open, cultivated country, through all the towns bordering upon the St. Lawrence up to Quebec, and with what result? With the result that to-day we stand face to face with a debt of no less than fifty millions of capital expenditure, and year after year a large deficit to be taken out of the treasury of Canada for the purpose of paying the expenditure over and above all that we can make out of the road.

Whether Liberals or Conservatives were in power, I would deplore in the strongest manner any attempt in this country by any Government, I care not who they are, or who they are composed of, to construct another Government railway. That is the position I take.

I confess that when I learned that the Minister of Railways (Mr. Blair) had come back from British Columbia with his mind made up to take this great work up and construct it as a Government work, I confess that I was startled, and I felt it would be the greatest calamity that could happen to Canada for her to undertake to construct that road from Lethbridge to Nelson, or to the Columbia River, as a Government work. Because, as I said before, Governments cannot construct railways in an economical manner, they are under pressure, they are under influence, they are under embarrassments that do not apply to companies. Suppose a Government undertakes the construction of a railway, what is the position? They ask for tenders, tenders come in. Hon. gentlemen know the howl that is raised by the Opposition, whoever they may be, if the lowest tender is not taken; and yet it is a tender that a company, who have got to find the money out of their own pockets, would not look at in their own interest, and would set it aside, and they would be consulting their own financial position by taking a much higher tender.

So I say that the Government have not the latitude, they have not the means of saving public money, as a private company can save theirs. Then, when it comes to the operation of the railway, where are you? Why, Sir, every gentleman sitting behind the