

He was, as was evidenced by his utterances in the country and in this parliament, in favour of the absorption by the government system of railways of the branch lines connecting with the trunk line. This was an issue in the last general elections, and an issue upon which both parties apparently were agreed. Now, this government has been in power since October last, and I would think that my hon. friend would be in a position to map out to the House what action he proposes, and how soon definite action is likely to be taken, on this question. I am speaking for myself; I am not attempting to speak for anybody else. I have for many years supported the policy which I have outlined with reference to the branch lines, and have time and again brought it to the notice of parliament. Therefore, I take a deep individual interest in that proposition. Allied with that, is the question of the operation of the railway. We all take for granted that it is the policy of this government to continue the government operation of the railway. There have been differences of opinion in the past as to the manner of that operation, and the method of management. A few years ago, during the régime of my hon. friend from South Renfrew (Mr. Graham) the method of management was changed. Up to that time, from the inception of the railway, it had been managed by a single manager, with the minister responsible to parliament. My hon. friend from South Renfrew proposed a change to a board of management, consisting first of four members and later of five members, a change to which I was strongly opposed. I gave expression to my views at the time. I did not think it would work in the interest of either the Intercolonial railway or the country, and in my judgment, experience has confirmed that opinion. During the recent campaign, particularly in the province of New Brunswick, the question of the operation of the railway was an issue. In my own constituency the gentleman who was the candidate of the Conservative party held strong views on the subject, and stated unqualifiedly that if a Conservative government came into power the board of management would be abolished and the old system of a general manager would be returned to. I will state briefly the objections which I take to the present system, and my reasons for those objections. First one general manager, with decision of character, could more properly administer a great work like the Intercolonial railway than could a board of management consisting of four or five or any number of members, for the reason that under such a

body there is a division of responsibility, and an absence of a sense of responsibility.

I think that in actual practice there have been divisions of opinion, there have been delays, and the results have not been conducive to the best interests of the Intercolonial. But the exponents of the political faith which is now represented in this House by the government, during the campaign, made promises to the people and pledged themselves to a resumption of the old method and the abolition of the Board of Management. The views which I hold are not party political; they are individual, and they are shared in by people of both shades of political thought and opinion, in the eastern provinces at least. I think that the time has come when we should know from the minister the course which he proposes to take in connection with that matter. It is all very well to say this matter is under consideration, but when there were declarations made throughout the country, and when the matter has been so much in the public mind, it seems to me it is due to the people of eastern Canada that some light should be thrown upon the course that the government is likely to pursue in this connection. I put upon the order paper, some time ago, some questions asking the minister as to what decision had been reached in connection with this matter. I do not recall whether the minister stated that the matter was even under consideration, but if I remember correctly he stated that no action had then been taken. As an evidence of the universal idea that prevails in the maritime provinces with respect to the present management of the railway, I will call the minister's attention to an article which appears in a newspaper published in the town of Truro, N.S., in the constituency represented by my hon. friend (Mr. Stanfield) who holds the responsible position of whip of the Conservative party. That newspaper is known as the Truro 'Citizen.' Gossip has it that the member for Colchester is very largely interested in the Truro 'Citizen,' and therefore, the views expressed by it should certainly have some weight with the present Minister of Railways, and I am sure that they are not uninteresting to the hon. member for Colchester himself. In the issue of the Truro 'Citizen' of March 2 there appears an article which reads as follows:

And Messrs. Brady, Tiffin, et al. still reign supreme, despite the fact that the people's road is bled dry to run up a surplus, while the rolling stock and motive power is dwindling to a mere nothing.

And now along the wire comes another 'holler' from these grand stand actors, self-advertisers and self-boosters.