

ment have taken no position. The matter is one of too great importance, involving too many risks, involving large demands, for the government to lightly jump into new undertakings of any kind, and we thought it desirable to wait the opening of parliament in order to consult our friends and have the benefit of the advice of parliament before taking any steps. But we give due warning to the Canadian parliament—and I think it is not out of place—that new efforts have to be made by the Canadian people to meet the new requirements resulting from the development of our country.

Now you see there was an indication as plain as language could make it that we made a difference between water transportation and transportation by means of a new railway.

But the subject came up later on on a motion of my hon. friend (Mr. Borden, Halifax) on May 26th. My hon. friend became impatient and wanted to know what was the policy of the government in regard to this transportation question, especially in regard to this commission. He made a speech and concluded with these words:

I think therefore, Mr. Speaker, that under the circumstances, I am justified in asking the Prime Minister to take the House and the country into his confidence with regard to this matter, and to make that announcement of policy which it seems to me should have been made long ago in this session which has already occupied nearly three months; and to state to us fully and frankly what we are to expect from the government in the shape of a policy on a question of so much importance to the most vital interests of the country.

I answered, speaking for the government, in this way:

In my humble judgment, the transportation question under existing conditions, resolves itself into three different parts. First of all there is the question of water transportation, chiefly connected with the terminals. Then there is the transportation question for the new and rapidly growing settlements in the prairie sections; and then there is the question of transportation from the prairie sections to the sea-board. With regard to the first, this is the question which we had chiefly in our minds when at the opening of parliament we declared that the transportation question was engaging our attention, and that we intended to appoint a commission to deal with the subject. We have been carrying on works of great magnitude at all parts of our great water system, in order to develop it and to make the transportation of the products of the west, and of the products going from the east to the west cheaper to the producer and to the consumer. We have works on the great lakes; we have works on the St. Lawrence; we have works at Port Arthur and Fort William, and it is possible that we may require some more. We have works at the head of canal navigation at Port Colborne which are now under construction; we have works in the city of Montreal which have been carried on both by the Harbour Commission there and by the government; we have works at Sorel and Three Rivers carried on by the government; we have works at Quebec and we have also extensive works in St. John, New Brunswick. Now, I think it may be said that all these works have

been carried on, not under any general system, but chiefly from the local point of view of each particular place. We deem it of the greatest importance to have, if possible, all these different works carried on under a general comprehensive system. Before we ask for more money to be expended upon them, we think that it is advisable to have the report of a commission of the best experts that we have in the country in order that we may be able to lay before parliament at this session or next session a comprehensive plan, as to what should be done in these different localities or in other localities in order to meet the object in view.

Nothing could be plainer, it seems to me, than the fact that it was the intention of the government that the commission should deal with water transportation and terminals. I proceeded to say:

There is another feature of the system of transportation to be considered. At the present time the west is filling very rapidly. Next year the valley of the Saskatchewan will be one of the greatest producing areas of the country. It is of immediate necessity therefore that another artery in the form of a railway should be built in order to afford the settlers not only an outlet for their products, but a means of bringing in what they require from the eastern provinces. Probably this week, certainly at an early day, it will be the duty of the government to lay on the Table of the House certain resolutions with regard to this railway. But apart from that, there is another scheme which has been engaging the attention of the House and the country at large. It is generally accepted, I believe, at the present time, that we must have another trunk line to connect the producing centres of the prairies with the tidal waters of the east. This is the point which my hon. friend had chiefly in view when he spoke a moment ago. I may say to my hon. friend at once that the government are not connected, though he implied that they were, with any scheme which has been proposed. We are considering the matter, but I am not prepared to say that we can at this moment lay on the Table the conclusions at which we have arrived; but we shall deem it our duty to do so before the session is over.

Now, Sir, there was an intimation as clear it seems to me as language could make it, that we required the transportation commission to inquire into the subject of water communication, and did not require any more information with regard to the trans-continental railway which we have proposed. In view of the attitude which has been taken that we must have the easiest possible new means of communication between the east and the west it seems to me that it would be idle for me to spend any more time in justifying our course in this regard. It has been justified not only by our hon. friends on this side of the House but still more by the attitude of our hon. friends opposite in this respect. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition stated this morning that we have in the contract failed to provide proper safeguards in order to ensure the trade of the west going by way of Canadian ports. My hon. friend said nothing new this morning. That point has been met over and over again, it was answered completely