

Sir THOMAS WHITE: Yes.

Mr. GERMAN: I presume that is so. That clears the situation somewhat to my mind. I stated when this resolution was introduced that I was opposed to the proposition for more than one reason. I am opposed to the proposition because, in my opinion, it does not go far enough. Last year, when the Government asked Parliament to grant further aid to the Canadian Northern Railway company, the Minister of Finance stated, as he has stated to-day, that a commission would be appointed to inquire into the whole railway system of Canada, and to report as to the best means of dealing with the whole railway system. That commission was appointed, composed of three of the best men that the Government could get—three undoubtedly exceptionally good men. These men have reported, and two of them, Sir Henry Drayton and Mr. Acworth, have made the majority report. They have reported in favour of a scheme altogether different from the scheme which the Government is proposing. Their report is absolutely at variance in my opinion with the proposition which the Government had suggested. I would have been glad to have seen the report of the majority of that commission more fully carried out than is being done.

I think the time most opportune when the Government should have courageously taken over this whole matter, in view of the duplication of railway lines across the Dominion of Canada, which are paralleling each other, and which are absolutely unnecessary. There are branch lines being projected all over the country which are not necessary for the development or the needs of the country. I think it was the duty of the Government, and the people expected the Government, to take a more courageous stand in this matter and follow out, to a very large extent at any rate, the recommendation of Sir Henry Drayton and Mr. Acworth. But they are not doing that. I am not at all in accord with the report of the majority of the commission in regard to the Grand Trunk. I quite agree with the statement of the hon. gentleman from South Renfrew, that the report is a very harsh one in regard to the Grand Trunk railway, which is the pioneer road of the country, but it is not necessary to develop that position at the present time. I wish to state, however, that I would have been in favour of a broader and more courageous policy, one which would have gone further in the way of public ownership of these railway systems than this proposition goes. What-

ever we may have thought in the past in regard to public ownership of railroads, we must change our opinion at the present time, if we are to keep pace with the opinion of the public, because it is an undoubted fact that the wheels of democracy are revolving very rapidly. The democratic juggernaut is advancing rapidly, and those who stand in the way will be crushed under its wheels, whether they are lords, barons, knights or premiers.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: Then do not stand in the way.

Mr. GERMAN: And I tell the Government they must not stand in the way. The people are determined to have public ownership of these utilities, and it will come. As far as I am individually concerned, I am in favour of the proposition of the Government for taking over the Canadian Northern railway, so far as it goes, but not at all in the manner in which they are doing it. In 1914 I, at any rate, advocated the taking over by the Government of this whole system. I stated then that the Canadian Northern system was bankrupt. The Prime Minister acknowledged it was bankrupt. The Solicitor General acknowledged that they had to have assistance from the Government in order to complete the lines, or bankruptcy stared them in the face. It is bankruptcy to-day, in so far as being capable of going ahead and doing business is concerned.

As the Finance Minister has stated, they must have \$20,000,000 or \$25,000,000 immediately to tide them over their present difficulties. That being so, it is the duty of the Government to take over this road. But under what system should it be taken over? I say most emphatically—and I believe that in this I am borne out by the majority of the people—that the system that the Government is adopting in taking over this road is not the best system. The member for St. John has said—in that I agree—that there should be an expropriation of this property. Hon. gentlemen opposite try to surround this question of expropriation with a considerable degree of mystery. But there is nothing mysterious in expropriation proceedings; such proceedings are being taken every day; they are being taken continually by the Government. The very day the Government began expropriation proceedings in respect of the Canadian Northern Railway system, the people would become the owners of that system; the Government could take possession of it and begin to operate it, just