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### People Never Consulted

"Today we have 22,000 under the control of the Government. That 20,000 additional miles has been taken without any reference to the wish of the people. The C.N.R. was taken over during the war by the government of Sir Robert Borden and the G.T.P. system acquired since. Notwithstanding that the people were not given a chance to pass on the acquisition of these railways and all that means in the way of obligations Mr. Meighen absolutely refused to allow the representatives of the people in parliament to see the terms of the acquisition before they were signed.

"In the days of Sir John Macdonald when the C.P.R. was being built and Sir Wilfrid Laurier when the trans-continental was being put through, the terms of the agreement were brought into Parliament and laid on the table. The members were given the opportunity of discussing these terms and the press of the country and the railway experts were given the opportunity of viewing the whole situation before it was too late to change the terms of the agreement.

"We believe it was in the interests of the people that the proper course should be followed in Parliament and that the agreement as to the acquisition of the G.T.P. should be submitted to the representatives of the people before it was signed. Will anyone say that that was not the right attitude to take? Will you believe me? Mr. Meighen asked his followers to see to it that that course was not followed. The agreement was signed, sealed and delivered without the representatives of the people in Parliament ever seeing the agreement at all.

#### Information From England.

"What is worse! Although the representatives of the people were denied that right, the agreement was sent to England and the bond and shareholders of the G.T.P. whose interest payments are being guaranteed for ten years to come out of the taxes of the people of this country saw the agreement, and having found it satisfactory, accepted it and we learned its terms by cable dispatches that came from the Old Country.

"Rights were granted to the bondholders in England which were denied the representatives of the people of Canada, the taxpayers of this country. Can you endorse government of that kind? That is the most extreme of autocratic government. No wonder railway rates are what they are. Members of Parliament had no opportunity to see if there were any injustices in the agreement. The people are carrying the burden of that contract at the present time.

"Now that the railways are in the

possession of the country, how has Mr. Meighen dealt with them? He has appointed a group of his friends and calls them the board of directors of the C.N.R. The act that provides for the creation of a board of directors has not yet been put into force. This so-called board is already formed under some legislation passed in 1914 in connection with the C.N.R. These gentlemen have assumed the power and the Government has permitted it. They have the management of the railways together with the merchant marine.

"Parliament last year voted 165 millions on account of railways and navies alone. Ten years ago it only took 123 millions to run the whole government of Canada, including railways, canals and interest on the public debt. Most of this money is transferred to this board, the spending of it, as well as the revenues. It is an enormous sum of public money. You would expect that the Government would be most careful and ready at all times to give to the peoples' representatives the fullest information possible. We took that view. We began to ask the Government how much money had been spent, how about contracts, and we were told they had not the information but would try and secure it.

"Finally we saw that the Government did not intend to give us the information. They answered us that the Government had not the information, and that the information was of a type that belonged to the directors of the system.

#### Questions Asked

"What were the questions? Mr. Meighen says he wants to keep the system out of politics. Do you think these questions would tend to bring the system into politics? Who are the board, and are they directors of any other companies, and if so, what? Has any insurance been placed on government railways, and if so, with what companies, and the rates? Has the Government let contracts for railway equipment, and if so, with whom, and the rates?

"The Government reply, 'We have not the information.' It is a matter of concern to the C.N.R., as if that organization had nothing to do with the people of this country.

"Well, we had a little committee that went into the question. The first thing we found was that three-quarters of the directors were directors in concerns that were doing business with this board of the C.N.R. Then we found that 140 millions of insurance had been placed, of which 30 million was placed by the C.N.R. to take care of its own insurance, and the balance had been placed with one company, all the premiums paid in advance, and that two