

and the carriage of their traffic. He knows that if he does that, his people will appreciate his zeal in their interest, because they are keen competitors with all the other people who are supposed to want to use this railway line. What are the other railways that are going to use this great common railway highway? They will all be competitors with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, hauling grain in competition with that road, and they will be sure to suspect that they have not been given fair play. They will not send their business that way if they can find any other way. Those people will suspect, and they will act upon their suspicions even though these may not be well founded. Let me give you some of my experience as a member of the Railway Committee of the Privy Council. Five or six cases have occurred in which companies have come before the Railway Committee to have their disputes settled concerning the user of single or double tracks by two or three different companies, and the amount of jealousies, suspicions and difficulties experienced, in getting those companies to come to any sort of an agreement, whereby one of them was to be allowed to handle the trains and serve the others, one could hardly imagine. Even if it is only a few miles, the struggle for advantage, the time taken up, the controversies that arise, the suspicions that exist will not be allayed, they cannot be allayed—it is not in human nature. Therefore, I feel as though I am bound to say that it is perfect moonshine, it is misleading the people of this country, to try to make them suppose that they are to have a grand transcontinental highway at their disposal, to be used in common in the way this Bill declares and this contract contemplates. So, one of the bases on which this thing is being pushed forward now with this prodigious haste will bear no weight, by reason of the utter impracticability of working it out in actual railway practice. The way to do this, as I have said, would be, if you like, to put a commission in charge of the road. Then you might rest assured that, with a commission that has no interest in either of the competing railways, no interest in the traffic, would have the confidence of all the railways that might want to use the road. And the way they would use it, and the only way they could use it, would be by bringing their loaded cars up to the point of intersection and handing them over to the commission to be hauled over the road to the point of destination. But when we are told that we can pick up trains at this place or that and carry them, if necessary, with their own crews over hundreds or thousands of miles, we are being led in a kind of hysterical frenzy, it seems to me, to adopt ideas that are wholly and absolutely impracticable, and which show that a little thought and a little time, and a little more thought and a little more time, and still a little more

thought and a little more time, would not have been wasted if devoted to the consideration of this scheme. Now, for these reasons, I am unable to understand, after we had adopted the principle of government ownership down to this point, what are the reasons, what are the cogent and convincing reasons why we should divorce the principle of public operation from the principle of public ownership and hand the road over to the operation of a private company. There is no reason to my mind which at all ought to commend this idea to one's reasonable judgment. Therefore, I complain of that feature of the scheme. I think it is in this respect, radically defective, and that it cannot be worked out successfully. I think it contains defects which will impair the successful working of the railway and which will prevent rather than promote the successful working out of financial results. And it will strike a blow, which I regret to see struck by the government of this country, at the principle of government ownership.

Of course, this contract contains a very great many clauses for the purpose of securing this and assuring that. But, I have yet to learn that you can frame clauses which will meet the ingenuity of company officials, or prevent a company which may be operating the road from having very much its own way in the premises. And when you consider that railway interest in this country has become so powerful, that even within a few weeks of the present session of parliament, they can get a scheme sprung upon the country involving many millions, what reasonable ground have you for expecting that, in these minor things which affect only individuals doing business with the road, you can enforce the clauses and provisions which you have incorporated in the contract in order to bind and hold them? I think we are building upon very slight foundations the hope which my hon. friend has expressed.

Now, passing from what is called the eastern section, I wish to make a few observations upon the question of the prairie section. A curious condition of things is developed here. The policy of even government construction and ownership is abandoned when you come to this portion of the line. Why should it be thrown aside here? I fail to understand—that is, I fail to reconcile it with any interest which Canadian people have in the matter or with anything calculated to serve the welfare of the general public. If it is simply because a railway company desires and prefers to own the prairie section that we think it is proper or if we think, on balancing the advantages and disadvantages it is better that a company should own and operate it, very well; I can see the force of that. But these reasons have not yet been made apparent. If it is a sound principle to own your railroad from Moncton to the prairies, to the confines