

Conservative Party came into power, and everything stopped; the population did not increase; there was stagnation, according to the Drayton-Acworth report. Sir Henry Drayton said, six years afterwards, that there were then seven and a half million people. At the same time, six years afterwards, the railways had increased from 24,000 to 40,000 miles. I invite anyone to read the report. These figures were not invented by me, but were given by Sir Henry Drayton, who was afterwards Minister of Finance and then was Chairman of the Railway Commission. In the four Western Provinces there were only 120 persons per mile of railways; still the people in the Northwest wanted more lines.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: All those railways, except the Pacific extension, were guaranteed by the Government which went out of power. The railways were projected and the contracts made by it.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Be that as it may, the facts are there. Drayton does not say that in his report.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: That is the most important fact.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: However, I have not read it in the report. We had 40,000 miles, with only 120 persons per mile of railroad in the four Western Provinces, whilst in the United States, with their tremendous mileage of 240,000 miles—ten times around the world at the equator—there were 400 persons to support every mile of railway. Everybody who knows anything of railway stocks in the United States knows that. Now, what chance have we, with less than 200 persons a mile, to support our railways? That is the great question.

I suppose the Commission that is sitting now is not a court of justice, and we have a right to speak here. It has been suggested that three or five of the principal men of each of the railroads—some from the C.P.R., and an equal number from the Canadian National—should form a board, and if they could not agree on a chairman, then the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, I suppose, would appoint the chairman. I am against government operation from start to finish, because I believe that what is everybody's business is nobody's business. The United States, a much wealthier country than we are, started government operation and were losing millions every day, and they handed back the railways to private owners. Those railroads were not only in a bankrupt state, but the road-bed, the rolling-stock and all the equipment were dilapidated. Notwithstanding that it was made by a big

and wealthy country, and during the war, when they were piling up money there, the experiment was not profitable.

The plan of appointing a joint board is not my own, but I think that in such a way we could save duplication. Is there any sense in the present methods? Look at the time-tables of trains leaving Montreal on both lines at the same time, and arriving here at the same time, with tracks over practically the same territory; and this duplication occurs every day, and several times a day. Is there any sense in it? Could that not be stopped at once? The Board of Railway Commissioners are remiss in their duty. They should summon Mr. Beatty and Sir Henry Thornton and say: "You cannot afford this. There are not enough passengers in the two trains to fill one train properly, and a great many of the passengers are travelling on passes, which do not help the revenue." It is perfectly right to make the ten per cent reduction that is proposed, but that is only a flea bite. Look at the extravagance that is going on with those railroads competing one against the other. If the country were rolling in wealth it could not afford that. The wages of the railway people are reduced. They went up because the cost of living had gone up. Now the cost of living is down. Two dozen of eggs can be bought in Montreal for what one dozen used to cost; three bags of potatoes can be had for what used to be the price of one bag. If the wages were reduced proportionately we should be all right.

Much has been said about trading outside of Canada. It is all right if you can do it, but for a couple of centuries Canada lived very well within itself and progressed. I have tried to find statistics as to what our external trade was before Confederation. The amount was very little. People provided for themselves. The honourable member for De Salaberry (Hon. Mr. Béique) will tell you that where he was brought up the total sum spent by the family in a year was very small, and it was nearly all spent in the country. I do not know that the ordinary farmer would in a year spend more than twenty or twenty-five dollars on imported commodities for his wife and family of seven or eight children. There is not a thing that we cannot manufacture here, and yet we import by shiploads. There is no reason why we cannot manufacture our sugar in this country. England, the country that owns nearly all the cane plantations in the world, uses more than half beet root sugar. After the war with Napoleon, France could not get any more sugar because England was in control of the