

other critics say, "Australia has failed in its steamship venture." Perhaps it has, but perhaps it did not have the efficient management which we have and which would ensure our consolidated steamship lines being a paying proposition. My further answer to that is that we have accomplished it so far as the Canadian Pacific is concerned. They can handle a steamship line and succeed, and I am quite confident it could be successfully handled in connection with the consolidated national lines.

Mr. PUTNAM: All government owned?

Mr. MACLEAN (York): All government owned, absolutely. There is another criticism of this course, namely, that if we had only one road in this country we would not be able to handle the labour unions. Well, that objection disappears when you take into consideration the fact that the brotherhoods of to-day, while they do deal with two roads, are united. They will be united, and I am confident that there will be no trouble in that connection. There has been no trouble since the Canadian Pacific achieved its success and since the Canadian National started. The result has been better service, and that would be the case under the new status.

The question may be asked: How could this be done—it is an enormous proposition. The common stock of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, which is really the only thing you have to consider, is valued at about \$300,000,000 and to-day it is paying ten per cent. That common stock could be changed, perhaps, into a five per cent debenture carrying no voting power, which would sell at 120 or 130 in a market like that to-day; it would be one of the great securities of the world. By proceeding in that fashion there would be no great commitment upon the country—nothing like what is involved in the proposal now before the House for the creation of a steamship service.

I want to refer to some of the advantages that would come from this consolidation. I have spoken about the unnecessary competition of two lines when one line would do. There is also the unnecessary competition in getting and retaining business. Does anybody know what the cost of the personnel to canvass for railroad freights in this country is? Has anybody any idea of the law costs in connection with two big systems, one fighting the other? Has anybody an idea of the cost of the propaganda that these two roads are now spending their money on? Practically all that would disappear under the system. Some men might be put out of employment, but these men could be taken care

[Mr. W. F. Maclean.]

of as regards their wages and still great saving could be made. All I am urging is that the government take this into consideration; I am simply throwing out the suggestion in order that the people may be seized of the fact that it is within the realm of possibility. It would be an ultimate solution of our transportation problem both by water and by land for all time to come. Are we to continue our present foolish over-competition as between these two lines, at enormous expense? Are we to continue building unnecessary lines? I attended the conference where the proposal came up in connection with a railway outlet from the Peace river country. After a great deal of talk there, and after it had been suggested that either the Canadian Pacific or the Canadian National, or both, should build into that country, the conference at last got wise—the Minister of Railways (Mr. Graham) and the premiers of the visiting provinces who discussed the question all spoke of one thing, namely, the necessity for co-operation and the cutting down of unnecessary expense with the ultimate object of reducing freight rates and getting better service. The people are sick and tired of the unnecessary railroads we have in Canada to-day and of the suggestion that they are to be increased and extended for generations to come. Let us stop all that.

Many other savings could be accomplished; I have not time to mention them now. But let me say just here that the decision of this House yesterday marks a new era in the history of our country. After a great deal of discussion the House of Commons decided that they would begin—and properly so—to consider the question of constitutional amendment as the right of this House. I say that was one of the most significant things that ever took place in this country, and an even more significant thing would be to decide upon the consolidation of our railway lines and the taking over of the steamship lines of the Canadian Pacific, thus not only effecting great saving of money but also increasing by three-fold the efficiency of our transportation system.

Now I want to come back to the steamship combine. I am told that my good old friend Aimé Geoffrion is coming here to present the case of the North Atlantic Shipping Conference. That "conference" is a great word. It reminds me a good deal of the evangelical attitude of men like Gladstone and John Bright in the old days when they were speaking against the opium evil. That same attitude seems to be adopted by these—I shall not call them pirates, but they are pretty nearly that if we are to believe half of what