

penny post, for it is not the peculiar function of sovereigns in these days to be concerned about domestic actions taken by governments.

Then the question of transportation is dealt with, but so sketchily that one is unable to understand which railway of the many in eastern Canada may be taken over by the Canadian National. We do not know whether it is intended that the railway that bears the name of the Oriental, I think it is, or some other railway is to be absorbed in eastern Canada. Nor do we know what other railways in western Canada are to be absorbed. It may be that that is done for the purpose of shortening the debate in order that the time of parliament may not be wasted and that we may direct our attention only to concrete problems as they arise, and it was not wise previously to inform us because it might involve too much discussion. That might have been the object of the government and, if it is, perhaps it is to be commended.

Then the speech proceeds further with the intimation that it is proposed to amend the Railway Act by increasing the powers of the Board of Railway Commissioners and giving it wider jurisdiction. I am sure the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Motherwell) must have heard that with great satisfaction, when I recall what he said in days gone by about the Board of Railway Commissioners, which conduced, in no small way, to lessen its usefulness in this country. I can conceive how happy he must have been when he and his colleagues gave their approval to this paragraph in the speech from the throne.

The Board of Railway Commissioners has ceased to have the respect of Canada as it had in the early days of its history. It is my duty to make this observation, and the Minister of Agriculture has, on more than one occasion, pointed out the same thing. So long as the positions on that board are made rewards for played-out politicians, just so long will that board cease to be the tribunal it should be in this Dominion. I say that reluctantly, but I say it very definitely and I say it very positively. This tribunal is charged with wider responsibilities than any tribunal in Canada. I wonder if this house realizes that the Board of Railway Commissioners has jurisdiction over the whole of the transportation system of Canada; a jurisdiction touching upon the integrity of not millions but billions of dollars. We are appointing to that tribunal from time to time, as judges charged with this enormous responsibility, men who are not qualified to discharge the onerous duties of their position. If this tribunal has failed to maintain the respect and regard that

the Canadian people had for it when it was first established, it is because this government has failed, since 1921, to realize and appreciate and understand the seriousness of the obligation that rests upon it with respect to that tribunal.

I but voice the sentiments expressed by my friend the Minister of Agriculture in days gone by in the province of Saskatchewan, and last year in western Canada, when I ask the government to consider the importance of that tribunal when opportunity offers for new appointments. I ask them to consider the large jurisdiction it possesses and how closely it touches the lives of the people of this country; from railroad crossings to freight rates, and from joint terminals down to the smallest matter such as the passage of electric wires over a railroad track. These matters are within its jurisdiction, and when I find that the Minister of Railways (Mr. Dunning) proposes to introduce legislation, as the speech indicates, whereby this board will be granted wider powers of investigation, I trust he realizes that concurrently with the grant of wider powers there should be the grant of wider experience and knowledge of Canadian matters to the judges dealing with these problems.

The matter of dealing with the pensions of the Canadian National railway system, of course is purely a matter of administration because a pension system existed in the old Intercolonial, the Grand Trunk and the Grand Trunk Pacific. I do not believe such was the case in the Canadian Northern. I understand that legislation has already been introduced by the minister moving the first reading of his bill to-day whereby a general scheme will be promulgated so that all these outlying pension schemes may be consolidated into a whole.

Now we pass to a matter which is, after all, of paramount importance to this country; the problem of immigration. My friend the hon. Minister of Immigration (Mr. Forke) assured us last fall that he did not propose to be as modest and meek in the future as he had been in the past. While coming events should not cast their shadows behind, there had not then been any vacancy in the governorship of Manitoba and I realize that he looked forward with great satisfaction to meeting us again at Philippi. When one reads this speech one is amazed to find:

A flow of immigrants commensurate with Canadian requirements and selected strictly for their ability to promote the general prosperity of the country is being satisfactorily maintained.