Montral Gazette 03/18/22

English Railway Journal's Appreciation of His Worth and Work

IDEAL PUBLICITY AGENT

Attitude Toward Labor and Leaders Made Men of Older School Shake Their Heads

The London Railway Gazette, of October 13 contains the following in reference to the new president of the Canadian National Railway Board: A few weeks ago a leading railway officer remarked to us that in his opinion it would be little short of a calamity if the services of Sir Henry Thornton were lost to British railways. That "calamity" is about to take place, for, as was intimated in a portion of our issue last week, Sir Henry Thornton has accepted the position offered to him of president of the newly-formed Canadian Na-tional Railways System,

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Lord Claud Hamilton's speech at the annual meeting of the Great Eastern Railway in February, 1914, announcing the appointment of an American general manager, and the reasons which led the directors of that company to make the appointment, raised much controversy. Starting with such a "wet sail," many smaller personalities would have accomplished little. Considered at first as an intrusion, Sir Henry Thornton has come to be regarded as an institution in the British railway world. Everyone now quite understands why the general superintendent of the Long Island Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad made such an impression on Lord Claud Hamilton. If he had not done anything else in his thirty years' chairmanship of the Great Eastern Company, this one act would always be a striking example of his perspicacity.

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Within a few months of Sir Henry Thornton's Great Western appointment came the outbreak of the Grent War in August, 1914. His services during the war are recorded elsewhere in this issue. He became a naturalized British subject and so to speak, "burnt his bridges" behind him, and most of us thought that his genial personality, always suggestive of fresh breezes from the West, would long continue to be a powerful force in the counsels of those responsible for British railway management and operation. What he has already accomplished on the Great Eastern Railway, even in the difficult period subsequent to the war, has been the subject of many articles in our columns. He had no tion to Port aux Basques, Wild, where she is, now leid up, The Herhush where she is, now leid up, The Herhush where she is, now leid up, The Herhush where she is, now leid up, The machine to be seen purple of the vessel on her course for the position. The maskeshift fudder the vessel on her course for the position. The maskeshift fudder the position. The maskeshift fudder is and she shipped wait? Seen that the first she will be she wi

they are to be conducted on the sloth-ful, lethargic and "promotion-by-seniority" principles, which char-acterize so many Government de-partments. Undoubtedly Sir Henry Thornton's personality has dominat-ed the Great Eastern these last few years, and the officers and rank and file regard his impending departure as a personal loss.

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There is no point in ignoring the fact that although such speculations are in railway parlance "quite premature." Sir Henry Thornton had been freely mentioned as a possible general manager or joint generalmanager of the great railway company into which the "Eastern Group" of railways are to be amalgamated and absorbed. But evidently the potentialities of the newly-formed Canadian National Railways system have appealed to his imagination. He has remembered the old adage about a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush, and has accepted the presidency of the new system, which is a combination of the old Grand Trunk, the Grand Trunk Pacific, the Canadian Northern, the Intercolonial and other Canadian Government Railways. The total mileage of the system is something over \$2,000, and its annual gross earnings over £25,-500,000. It owns \$3,217 locomotives, \$3,302 passenger vehicles, and 129,-121 freight and service cars. It is interesting to compare these figures with the totals of the railways which will shortly comprise the Eastern Company. The total mileage will be 6,700; and the annual gross earnings are about £90,000,000. It will own 7,500 locomotives, 20,500 passenger vehicles, and 302,000 freight waggons.

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Thus, two great experiments are being entered on; judging from its present position, the Canadian proposition is the more difficult of the two. Sir Henry Thornton's temperament and qualifications will make him an excellent president of the Canadian National Railways. This country's loss is Canada's gain, but all here will wish him the best of good fortune.

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