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GALLUP POLE OF CANADA

BIGGEST VOTE ENDORSES PRESENT RAILROAD POLICY

But All-Government Ownership
Idea Runs Close Second In National
Poll of Opinion

By CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC OPINION

TORONTO, March 18 -- Do Canadians, who today are using their sprawling network of railways to a greater extent than was dreamed of five years ago, want all railways to be owned and operated by the Government, by private concerns, or by a combination of both?

The answer to this question, which has been an intermittently lively issue in the Dominion for years, was the object of a nationwide poll by the Institute, in which the opinions of a carefully balanced cross-section of the population were sought. Gallup interviewers from Victoria to Sydney, asked:

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"THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF TALK ABOUT HOW THE CANADIAN RAILROADS SHOULD BE OPERATED. WHICH OF THESE PLANS DO YOU THINK WOULD BE BEST:

1. HAVE ALL RAILROADS OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE GOVERNMENT
2. HAVE ALL RAILROADS OWNED AND OPERATED BY PRIVATE COMPANIES
3. CONTINUE THE PRESENT SYSTEM WITH SOME OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND SOME RUN BY PRIVATE COMPANIES?"

The public, which has shown some tendency towards favoring government control, and sometimes (as in the case of public utilities) outright government ownership, is by no means unanimous on the issue of the railroads. By a slight margin, the largest group of Canadians prefer to continue as at present, with a government operated line competing to some extent with a privately owned line. Here is the way Canadians would vote if this issue were the subject of a plebiscite today:

Government ownership	35%
Private ownership	16
Combination of both	38
Undecided	11

When the results of this poll are compared with those obtained some eight months ago, on the issue of government vs. private ownership of airlines, it is seen that there are a considerable group of Canadians who, while preferring a combination in the case of the railroad, want air travel to be completely in the hands of the government. To a comparable question bearing on airline control, the public, as reflected in the Institute's survey, voted this way:

Airline Vote

Government ownership	44%
Private ownership	18

W.L.M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1940-1950,
MG 26 J 4, Volume 377, pages C260783-C262184

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