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At the Federal Capital

The House of Commons

on the 23rd inst.

was engaged almost

exclusively in discussing

the Government's bill

for the taking over

of the Grand Trunk

Railway System of Canada.

The debate finished

on Saturday the 23rd, but

was continued over to

the following week.

The discussion on the

motion for the second

reading was quite lengthy,

and on many occasions

quite lively. It is a

curious fact that, during

the whole discussion, the

Government was

represented by only one

member, Mr. Fielding.

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It is a curious fact

after another, on the opposition

side of the House.

A brief consideration of each

of these arguments, if arguments

they could be called, will show

the utter futility and untenable-

ness of the ground assumed by

the opposition. The first point

was simply childish. It is true

that the principal business of the

special session of parliament was

the approval of the Treaty of

Peace, but the speech from the

throne which was read by His

Excellency the Governor General,

at the opening of the session,

specifically declared that other

business would come before par-

liament during the session.

Even if this were not in the

speech, it is simply childish to

put forward the statement that

the Grand Trunk proposition

could not be legitimately dealt

with at the present session of

parliament. It certainly would

not come before this session of

parliament if the Grand Trunk

bill had not been introduced

before the session. It is a

curious fact that, during the

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It is a curious fact

also that, during the

their hands two great outstand-

ing wings of the National Trans-

continental System, the Cana-

dian Northern and the Interco-

lontary Railway. These are

now great wings of the Cana-

dian National System of Rail-

ways, and they are separate from

one another, divided, as it were,

in the middle. The Grand

Trunk Railway which operated

extensively, in consequence of

its main line and its numerous

branches in the provinces of On-

tario and Quebec, occupies this

central position. But by joining

up these two outlying stretches

the government will have a com-

plete unified national system, and

will have its lines and branches

all through the great central

provinces of Canada, as freight

carriers for the through line.

Anyone who seriously considers

the situation will readily admit

that failure to secure this im-

portant central unifying link

would not be only shortsighted

policy, but would be laying the

foundation for disastrous results

in the future. Developing this

point further, this is to be

taking over the Grand Trunk

System is not assuming a dead

weight piece of property of no

present value. It is a going

concern, and up to the last, two

years, when almost every enter-

prise was meeting with disap-

pointment and in many cases

failure, it paid the annual in-

terest on its bonds. From

what it will be seen that the

present condition of the govern-

ment will only be a marginal ex-

penditure, that is to say, what

ever may be the shortage of the

surplus earnings of the road to

meet its fixed charges. Then

again it is expected, and with

no small degree of reason, that

the united lines, constituting the

great national railway system,

will increase its productive cap-

acity, and especially that it will

greatly reduce its fixed expendi-

ture in the matter of terminals

and managing staffs.

The third intangible ground

assumed by the opposition was

that the Grand Trunk should be

allowed to go into liquidation,

and that we then might buy it

at our own price. Surely this is

absolute foolishness. It would

be a very bad blow, a distinct

black eye to Canada's credit in

the estimation of the world, that

her of its great railway lines

was allowed to go into liqui-

dation in consequence of financial

bankruptcy. Not only would it

seriously injure Canada's credit,

but it would dislocate public

traffic, and in the end, would

probably wind up by the Cana-

dian Pacific Railway absorbing

the Grand Trunk line. It may

here be said that it is well

grounded and also generally be-

lieved that the whole opposition

to the government's proposal, in

this connection, has its origin and

principal force in the "Canadian

Pacific" Railway Company. All

know what a mighty corporation

that is, and what a great work it

is doing, and what a great work

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