

land between Quebec and the prairies? What will the railway cost? What are the prospects of settlement? What are the natural resources of the territory? Is there a good reason to believe that there will be a local traffic to sustain the road? These, and cognate questions should, I think, be first inquired into before we are asked by the responsible government of this country to commit ourselves to a work of this magnitude.

Now, Sir, I am brought naturally to call attention to some features of the contract in connection with the observations which I have just made. On the first page of the Bill you will have discovered a special feature indicated by the language employed in the preamble:

Whereas, by reason of the growth in population and the rapid development in the productiveness and trade of Canada and especially of the western part thereof, and with a view to the opening up of new territory available for settlement, both in the eastern provinces and in the west, and the affording of transportation facilities for such territory, and for other reasons, the necessity has arisen for the construction of a National Transcontinental Railway.

You will observe further on that it reads that you are to proceed to 'the construction of a National Transcontinental Railway to be operated as a common railway highway across the Dominion of Canada from ocean to ocean and wholly within Canadian territory.' It is to that particular feature that for a moment I desire to call the attention of the House. One of the fundamental grounds and bases upon which this scheme is founded—and you can see the consequences of this view later, when I further advance with my argument—is that it is necessary to furnish to that territory which we are opening up and developing a common railway highway.

Now, I apprehend that that language has been chosen for the purpose of conveying a specific idea. It is to be, not an ordinary railway in any sense, not a railway which could be owned and controlled by a corporation, although subject to all the powers of control which may be exercised through any tribunal which parliament may constitute but a government railway, to be used in a different sense from an ordinary railway—something in the nature of a highway, only with rails, so that every railway company which came along would have the right and opportunity afforded to it of traversing this railway with its trains; so that, as my hon. friend said in the course of his speech, a train could start at St. John or Halifax, run to Moncton, get on to this railway, and come out at Port Simpson; so that your locomotive, your train and your train hands could go on a long junketing tour across the continent from St. John to the Pacific ocean. That is to say, it would be a railway common to every railway company to use. That is the

meaning, I apprehend, of the language used, or else there is no meaning in it at all.

Now, let me call attention to clause 24 of the contract, which contains two or three sub-clauses which point to the same idea: First, sub-clause (a), and next, sub-clause (b). On reference to these clauses—I need not read them—you will see that they fortify the idea that trains might come along and pick up this railway, and run along it in the ordinary way in which a man with a horse and cart may travel along the highway. To show that this is the idea that underlies the measure, I will read a brief extract from what was said by the right hon. leader of the government on this subject. At page 7692 of 'Hansard,' my hon. friend says this:

So that under this agreement an Intercolonial train can leave St. John or Halifax and proceed all the way to Port Simpson. Under this agreement, a train of the Great Northern or of the Canadian Northern can enter upon this road at any point and go as far as the maritime provinces. So we have guarded this point in every way, and I believe that in this respect the provisions we have made will command the full satisfaction of the Canadian people.

If it were possible to produce the most conclusive and striking evidence that some features of this contract were framed without consultation with and without the advice or the opinion of anybody who knows anything at all about railroading, these clauses in the contract and this clause in the preamble afford that evidence. A more absolutely unworkable, and, in the opinion of every railway man in the country, a more senseless suggestion it would be difficult to make. The idea of commencing a scheme involving all the millions of expenditure which it is proposed that this scheme shall involve, and then saying you will do it in order to establish a common railway highway, so that 'a' company, 'b' company, 'c' company and 'd' company may have their trains travel thousands of miles over this railway. I have endeavoured to urge the view, but without the slightest success, that that was not railway usage or practice or possibility; but it is here all the same. I have no doubt that if my hon. friends had appealed to the honest opinion of the general manager of the Grand Trunk Railway himself, he would have pointed out to them the utter fallacy of such a suggestion as that—the absolute and utter impossibility of any such plan being worked out. Just look at it: What does it involve? It involves that a train shall leave the Intercolonial Railway, with its train hands, its locomotives and its cars, and shall start out. It runs its first day: what will it do? It has either to lie at some particular point over night, or get fresh men and a fresh locomotive. You have to have your locomotive looked after and repaired; you have to have your men sleep and your engine cooled, and other things attended to. Or, take your time and

Hon. Mr. BLAIR.