

in the United States, but on this point we have very little information.

Then there is a question that has been but little discussed during the passage of the Bill through this House, and I do not think it was much discussed in the other Chamber: that is the management and operation of the railways when the Grand Trunk comes into the Government's possession. When the Government take over the Grand Trunk they will be confronted with the very serious problem of operating 20,000 miles of railway. A business may look to be very prosperous and the price paid for it may be considered reasonable, but, as any honourable gentleman accustomed to business affairs is aware, unless that business is managed by a thoroughly competent, experienced man, it may become a great failure instead of a success, and may result in a great loss to the owner instead of bringing him proper returns. The same is true of this whole railway undertaking.

We have not had any information from the Government as to how they expect to be able to run this system once they get it into their hands. My honourable friend said that this committee of management, which is to be appointed under the Bill, will look after the operation of the railway for the time being. But I appeal to any honourable gentleman in this Chamber, and ask whether that is a satisfactory way of handling a large railway business of this nature, when that committee know that they are going to be dispossessed as soon as this transaction is completed and the stock is brought into the hands of the Government. As I understand it, that committee of management is simply for the purpose of carrying on the operation of the Grand Trunk Railway for a certain time, so that a working arrangement can be made between them and the other government railways. If the Government Railway system is to be a success, and is to be made profitable to the Government, the mistakes that are now being made will have to be avoided and the system will have to be put in better condition than it is in to-day. We must appoint a Board of Management which will have the confidence not only of the Government, but of the country, so that the people will feel that the operation of these roads is being carried on to the very best advantage.

During this debate a great deal has been said about the question of government ownership. I think that every honourable gentleman in this Chamber, whether he is

in favour of government ownership or is opposed to it, now that this Bill is going through and is going to become law, is anxious that the operation of these roads should be carried on so as to be of the greatest possible benefit to the country. I do not think that we have had from the Government sufficient information to enable us to know how this is to be attained; but I think it is a matter of great importance to the people of the country that the management of this enormous railway system should be such as to inspire their confidence. From one end of the system to the other we have got to have men who will realize that it is their duty and their business to make the whole system a success. It would be a terrible thing for this country, especially in its present financial condition, if the large deficits of this railway should continue. I want to urge upon the Government, in the strongest possible way, that as soon as possible they should see that the whole government system of railways is placed in such a position that its operation will be maintained at the very highest point of efficiency.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Honourable gentlemen, there is one feature of the situation confronting us which I did not dwell upon in the remarks which I had the privilege of making to this Chamber when we were considering this Bill upon the motion for the second reading.

I take this opportunity of drawing the attention of honourable gentlemen to the advantage we possess in having Hansard, where in years to come we may see what position we individually occupied on certain questions; but that will not relieve honourable gentlemen of the responsibility of voting for the third reading of this Bill. I want to remind this Chamber that we are about to adopt a measure by which we assume the administration of an immense railway system, one of the largest in the country, covering the whole of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, with all the risks that such an administration entails. In doing that, we should realize that the Government of the day, when it faced the electorate in the last election, sought no mandate from the people to go into this venture.

I was not present at the caucuses held by the so-called Unionist party, but from reports in the press, and perhaps from echoes in another Chamber, I know that many important questions that were deemed to be vital to the best interests of Canada have