

political influence, the proposed step would be a very dangerous one to take. The eminent specialists to whom was referred the railway situation, in discussing this question of government control or ownership, suggested a board of trustees, the members to be appointed for different periods, from three to seven or ten years, and to retire as their respective terms expire. Possibly that might be a good policy; but I think I can suggest one that would be better. I say that modestly. I will outline it as briefly as I can.

We will assume that nine directors or trustees are necessary to protect the various interests of the country. Two should be appointed from the Maritime Provinces; two from Quebec; two from Ontario; two from the three western provinces, and one from the coast; or more might be appointed from the western provinces as their population increased. Those men should not be selected by the Government of the day. They could hardly be selected jointly by the leaders of the two parties. I am afraid that political leanings make the selection difficult. But it would be possible to appoint a selecting committee of men from the Bankers' Association, the boards of trade of the different cities, and perhaps the universities might be asked to name some men, so as to get highly specialized ability. A large committee of thirty or forty men would meet together and select the men to form this Government Railway Board. If only nine men were needed, then the leaders make a list of three times nine, say twenty-seven names—men well known in business—and those names would go before the committee which would make the selection. Those men should be selected for a long term of office. There might be a direction that they should be on the sunny side of life, men of under fifty or sixty. Of course, the ability of the men would be more important than their age. If a member of this board resigned or died, the remaining members would select his successor; because, if the vacancy were filled by the political party in power, we would at once introduce politics into the matter and impair the usefulness of the board. I am sure that if such a board of management, you may call them trustees, were obtained—a board that would impress the country with its honesty and fairness, as the present Railway Commission has done—it would be absolutely free from political influence, and would be able to conduct this enormous system in the same way that directors of a bank conduct the business of that bank.

The men appointed to this board should give their whole time to its work, and they should be well paid for their services. They might be given a retiring allowance similar to that which the judges receive upon retiring from the Bench. I am not offering this as a perfect scheme; but I do not like to hear it said that we cannot manage this great enterprise ourselves. I believe the public is growing away from the idea that a public position is one in which men are only allowed to advance the interests of themselves and their friends. I believe the temper of this country is growing better every day, and that every one is getting a higher conception of public duty. I believe that this country can enter upon a scheme of railway ownership that will produce desirable results.

To go back for a moment, it is of the greatest importance that we should settle our railroad problems as quickly as we can, and to prepare for the development that we expect and that we must have after the war, when we enter upon the period of reconstruction.

This is my first attempt to address this House, with the exception of an occasional "Hear, hear," or "Carried," in which some honourable gentlemen excel me. I have offered these imperfect remarks in a proper spirit. I do not take very serious objection to the remarks of the honourable gentleman who preceded me. He admitted that this problem was one which attracted him, and that he thought that we were approaching the time when it must be entered upon. I believe that the people of the country are prepared for this proposition, and for the larger scheme of taking over new railroad systems which are beyond the territory already organized and have their own fields of operation. I believe that we can settle these problems for all time to come. I will not discuss the financial responsibility involved, except, perhaps, to say that it will not be beyond the resources of the country. With the two lines of railway under discussion, and the Intercolonial railway, which is paid for, we shall have assets of over \$1,000,000,000. The Canadian Northern railway is apparently within a very short distance of being able to earn its own fixed charges. With the development of the Pacific coast traffic, with the completion of the terminals in Toronto and Montreal, with the growth of the Northwest, it is a fair guess that in a very few years this will be a paying concern. It cannot be regarded altogether as a liability. So long as