

to handle. Yet the Government seem to think it is their duty to adopt and enforce a policy that will prohibit the purchase of transportation, that will prohibit men from raising wheat and grain of all kinds, the carrying on of which would be the source of life to the transportation companies. If the minister will not only listen to this but heed it and put it into practice, he will do a great deal to redeem himself with regard to this proposal. If you could take things as you found them in 1911 and look back at the multiplication table, and see the way in which the wheat production runs you will see that for the ten or fifteen years prior to that under the Laurier policy it had been multiplied by ten. If the minister could have kept that ratio up, instead of choking it off, we would have had plenty during these five or six years to keep those railways as busy as they could be, and make them as rich as they could be. The way to make a success of our transportation problems in Canada is to build the country up so that the railway companies will have so much business that they will be kept busy, and the people of the country will be made rich at the same time. I am tired of this Toronto legislation, and this privileged legislation—and I do not care whether Clifford Sifton is at the back of it or not. It does not need Clifford Sifton to queer it. It is already queered. The people of Canada believe this matter is being run too much for the interests of the privileged classes, and if the minister would develop the Dominion along industrial lines, especially developing the agricultural interests of the country, he would help his railways, and would help the whole of Canada. He would help his friends the manufacturers and the large companies, just as well as he would help the farmers.

Mr. J. G. TURRIFF (Assiniboia): The railway condition we are up against now is no doubt the result of a good many years of great prosperity and development in the West. The fact, however, remains that we are up against a very serious proposition, which has to be dealt with, and to be dealt with in the near future. Under ordinary conditions, and in ordinary times, I should have favoured, and favoured as strongly as I could, that this road should have gone into the hands of a receiver, and be dealt with on that basis, letting the water out of the stock, if there is any water in it, and letting every creditor take his chances in the railway business and in that railway com-

[Mr. Knowles.]

pany as the rest of us would have to take in any business transaction into which we went which does not turn out successfully. But we are not under such conditions now, and I do not think such a course would be feasible. We have a tremendous debt facing us at the present time, which is being increased at the rate of almost one million dollars a day. We do not know when it is going to stop. We do not know what the amount of our debt will be when we get through with this war. If by allowing this railroad company to go into the hands of a receiver the result was that we had to pay a higher rate of interest on account of the black eye to Canadian credit and Canadian finance it may be the most expensive way we could possibly deal with the present railway question. On these grounds I am not at the present time in favour of this railway being allowed to go into the hands of a receiver.

There are some features of this Bill that I do not like but at the same time I am free to confess that if any one asks me to propose something better I do not know how to do it. I do not mean that I am in a position to know how to do it as well as many other hon. gentlemen in this House who have given more time and attention to the question and understand these matters a great deal better than I do. But, as far as I can make out, in a general way, it seems to me that the proposition is a fairly reasonable one.

There are two things that I want to bring before the committee that cannot be done in connection with this railway system. One is that this company must not, by any manner of means, be allowed to get into the hands of the Canadian Pacific. There is no doubt that the Canadian Pacific is a well managed business institution and that it is doing good work. I am not here to make any criticism of the Canadian Pacific railway. But those in charge of the Canadian Pacific railway have enough on their hands at the present time. The main point I want to make in this connection is that the Government will have on their hands the Intercolonial, the Transcontinental and the Grand Trunk Pacific, and it would be a calamity to Canada, in my judgment, if by any possibility the Canadian Northern, or any single branch line of that system should be eliminated instead of a part of the Government main line from the Atlantic to the Pacific, or that these branches should be put in the position of being feeders to the Canadian Pacific railway main line rather