

is any other solution of this Canadian Northern railway problem that will meet the approval and support of public opinion in this country. I think that the Government have taken a proper step, and that looking to the future, we can see the working out of the recommendations of the majority report. No one can say at this stage how this railway, the Intercolonial, the National Transcontinental, and the Grand Trunk Pacific, if we should acquire it later, will be administered. It might be proper to administer them all by a board of experts constituted somewhat as suggested in the Drayton-Acworth report. I absolutely subscribe to the principle that if this system is to be efficiently administered it must be administered absolutely free from partisan interference.

Mr. CARVELL: I am glad to get that admission.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: It is not an admission; that has been my principle throughout with regard to all these matters.

Mr. CARVELL: Does the minister feel that it is possible to get the same results from mere officials that you can get from men who are vitally interested, as the owners and managers of a railroad are?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: A good deal of weight is to be attached to the opinions put forward by my hon. friend; but the trend of public opinion is unmistakably along the line of these proposals. Nor is it a recent trend; it has gradually developed over a course of years. The whole tendency of public administration has been towards enlarging, not restricting, the functions of Government. I think we must look forward to that; I think we must have sufficient confidence in ourselves to believe that we can administer these enterprises; that we shall obtain officials who will manage them as efficiently as private enterprise will manage them. But even if we do not succeed in managing them quite as efficiently as private enterprise would manage them, still the advantages that will accrue to the public from public operation will more than counterbalance any defects in administration. This problem, as I say, has been here for years past—the problem of aiding these railways from time to time so that the systems may be completed and so that they may render service to the people. We believe that the time has come when we must discontinue affording this annual aid and lay down the principle that if the Government is to do the financing the people must

have the benefit of the ownership of the system. I listened with much interest—I always do—to what the member for Carleton said, but I believe that this is the step called for by all the circumstances existing to-day, and the step that the people of this country demand, if these roads are to be maintained, as I think they should be, as solvent going concerns.

Mr. CARVELL: I do not intend to go over all the ground again; I shall refer briefly to the chief arguments advanced by the minister. He says that we have to put up money every year; I agree with that.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: My hon. friend said, over a period of five years; that is possibly correct.

Mr. CARVELL: I was arguing that, while you might get along with \$15,000,000 or \$20,000,000 a year, if you advanced money annually to the Canadian Northern railway system, the moment the Government attempted to operate the road they would put out \$50,000,000 a year instead of \$15,000,000. The Intercolonial is a Government enterprise; it goes through a good country; it is as badly operated as anything in the world could be, and we get no interest out of it. I believe the Minister of Railways does claim that he had a surplus of a million or two last year, but that was all by doing Government business; it was only a matter of bookkeeping. You get no interest on your investment, and you put out millions every year in order to keep the thing going. Sometimes I feel that I should like to know how much we are putting out on the Intercolonial railway every year; it would run into many millions. The same thing will happen if the Government take over the Canadian Northern railway system; we will put up millions—not \$15,000,000, or \$20,000,000 a year, but \$50,000,000, \$60,000,000, or \$70,000,000. My hon. friend is correct when he says that there is a great trend of public opinion in Canada, especially in Ontario, in favour of public ownership. Public ownership of all sorts of utilities has been tried, but I have yet to see the public utility in Canada that in the matter of sound business management would compare for a moment with privately-owned and privately-operated utilities.

This afternoon I referred briefly to the Manitoba telephone system. The Manitoba Government took over the telephone business under very favourable circumstances. Does the minister know that to-day in no other place in Canada are the people pay-