

it is my opinion that all those services upon which the prosperity and convenience of the common people depend will, in the end, perhaps after a great deal of difficulty, become the property of and be successfully managed by the people. Therefore let us take all proper precaution to ensure success from the outset. The Government's responsibility in that connection is truly tremendous.

The opposition which has developed to this Bill is primarily for three reasons.

The first one is the disinclination or refusal of the Government to give information which they ought to give. This has led to a feeling of suspicion on this side that everything is not just exactly as it should be. A second reason, about which I know very little and am not very much concerned, has been suggested, namely, that these forty-four charters in the West are to be used for political purposes. The most important reason of all is as to the personnel of the Board that is going to operate the national railways. We have been told—and I absolutely agree with this—that in order to make public ownership of railways a success, we must have at the helm the very ablest men in the country. Is it logical to reappoint as the managers of this national railway, men who could not make a success under private ownership of the Canadian Northern? I say, it is not. The hon. member for Pontiac (Mr. Cahill) has been very persistent in his endeavours to procure information, and sometimes hon. gentlemen opposite have rather jeered at him, but what he has done has made some impression upon the public mind. Whatever hon. members opposite may think or believe, there is throughout this country a feeling of profound distrust that the Canadian National railways are still, to some extent, under the control of Mackenzie and Mann. I believe it is true that the public mind is uneasy at the thought that the men who have been taking out of this country a great deal more than they have ever put into it, still have, to some extent, their hand in public affairs in connection with the National railways. There may be no justification for that suspicion, but that suspicion is there, and the Government ought to take cognizance of it. Unless you have public confidence behind this project, you cannot make a success of it.

In Western Ontario, the people will soon develop a system of hydro-radial railways to be operated by electric power from Niagara falls. It would be a pity if the steam railroads which we have now, many of

which are not being operated successfully on the branch lines, should be continued in operation in that way, and that we should have to parallel them with electric lines, operated, we shall say, under the chairmanship of Sir Adam Beck and his Hydro-Electric Commission. Here is the difficulty as I see it. The men who are going to have charge of our national railways are men who were not formerly in sympathy with public ownership. I question whether they are now. The man who will be president of the Canadian National railways has, as is well known, been in conflict with the men in 5 p.m. Western Ontario who are trying to advance the idea of public ownership of railways and to operate them by electricity. The two parties ought to work together, and wherever possible, the steam roads should be converted into electric roads. But under present conditions, with Mr. Hanna in charge of the Canadian National railways and Sir Adam Beck in control of the Hydro-Electric Commission, I think that is almost impossible. Let me read a quotation from the Toronto Globe along those lines, although it does not go so far as I did:

In Ontario economy and efficiency demand the co-operation of the Canadian National railways and the Hydro-Electric Commission. The wasteful duplication of lines must be prevented, and the Hydro-Electric Commission should be permitted, when the Grand Trunk acquired by the country, to convert many branch lines into electric roads. These branches, which serve exclusively some of the richest and most populous districts of the province, are so far below the standard of the trunk lines, and so handicapped by heavy gradients, that they are much more adapted to electric than to steam traction. The Canadian National railways would profit by turning them over to the Commission, as they would continue to serve as feeders, without cost to the national system. For years the Hydro-Electric railway projects have been held up, waiting on Federal plans.

In conclusion, I would say to the Government, I believe they would be well advised if they constituted an entirely new board of directors to run the Canadian National railways. Let them pay the price and get the best men they can, men who believe in public ownership, and keep their hands off, cutting out patronage, and then there will be a chance for success.

Mr. HOCKEN: I am inclined to agree with the hon. member for North Waterloo (Mr. Euler) that we have public ownership because of necessity. That necessity is forced upon this country by hon. gentlemen opposite, because it was the way the railway situation in this country was bungled