

The Senate resumed at 8 p.m.

Hon. Mr. RAINVILLE: Honourable senators, when the House rose at 6 o'clock I was referring to an article in the *Financial Post*, in which the writer asserted that over a period of fifteen years our venture into the railway business had cost us one billion dollars, which had to be made up out of taxes. Every cent of all those taxes during that period, he points out, went to pay the cost of the experiment in railroad business by politicians, including my honourable friends and myself and all other members of Parliament. But, make no mistake, the man in the street wastes no time on being polite with us. He bluntly and plainly refers to what we have done as "playing at railroads." And he thinks rather bitterly of the increased old-age pensions, better living standards, unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, health insurance, better education and housing, and all sorts of other worth-while things he could have had out of that billion dollars, had our politicians been contented with a less costly railway policy.

Here is the situation, briefly stated, from another angle. We have a total railway mileage of 42,308 miles for 10,394,196 population, which, in 1930 comprised 7,346,404 people in the East and 3,047,792 in the West. Yet our railway mileage is so distributed that the West, with less than one-third of the population, has 22,440 miles of railway, or 2,572 more than the East. In other words, 29 per cent of the population has 53.2 per cent of the railway mileage. Such a situation has no parallel in the whole world. As a matter of fact, Quebec is the only province of Canada which shows an average of population to rail mileage above the economic safety line, with 589 persons per mile.

It serves no useful purpose to dig once more into the causes which have brought us to this impasse. We are faced with the fact. We have to find a solution. That is all. It is not the government of some old, decadent, worn-out nation of central Europe or the Near East, run ragged by centuries of despotism and exploitation, which is faced by this appalling situation. The problem pertains, not to one of the old nations, which have nothing to gain and therefore nothing to lose, but to the most hopeful and most promising of the young and growing nations in the world to-day, the nation which of all countries in the world has most to gain in the future, and therefore most to lose. Let us hear what some of the most outstanding authorities had to say of our country during the great depres-

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sion, from which the world has not yet recovered. In April, 1935, France-Amérique, of Paris, said:

Economic recovery is more pronounced in Canada than in most other countries.

Colonel Ayres in the *Cleveland Trust Bulletin* of 1934 said:

The improvement continues more progressively in Canada than in the United States.

In 1934, Roger Babson, of New York, whom we all know, said:

Of all the countries of the world, Canada is one of those which were the quickest to come out of the crisis.

Let me quote from *Liberty* of February 15, 1936:

Canada rounds the first lap of 1936 far in advance of any other nation—a record pace in the international marathon back to better times.

The honourable gentleman from Vancouver (Hon. Mr. McRae) told us yesterday that he was glad to be a Canadian. I would add that we are all lucky to live in Canada. We have one of the richest countries of the world. Our immense fields lie waiting for hands to cultivate them and people to consume their products. Our millions of horsepower lie asleep in the waterfalls that pour daily, hourly, into oblivion for want of industry to use their power. Our subsoil is replete with metals of all kinds, precious and base, awaiting only dynamite and the crushing mill of the miner. We have, to cite but a few instances, almost a world monopoly of nickel production; the great bulk of the world's supply of asbestos; we rank amongst the world's biggest producers of gold, silver, copper. There is no country in the world that can compete with us in the production of radium. At the price at which we can produce it, we have practically a world monopoly. Canada, with its 10,000,000 population, is the fifth nation in international commerce. And we have thousands of square miles, the contents of whose subsoil we do not even know, in many cases do not even suspect, and have never had time or opportunity properly to investigate.

Should this country, the envy of the world, be talking poverty? Should it be taxed to death? Is it decent that a country like this, in the prime of its early youth, awaiting a little capital, a lot of energy, courage, brawn, muscle and brain and a healthy manhood to develop it and bring out its wealth, should be strangled while its transportation problem is kicked about by groups of politicians,