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Sir Henry Thornton's Interview

In an interview with a Star correspondent in England, Sir Henry Thornton sets forth seven fundamentals of successful railway management under public ownership. These essentials as they appeal to the new head of the Canadian National Railways may be summarized as follows: 1. Unification of the various systems. 2. Extension of these where necessary. 3. Elimination of deficits. 4. Encouragement of immigration. 5. Efficient service to the public. 6. Sufficient wages for the employes. 7. Freedom from political meddling.

Sir Henry has covered the situation well. He declares that the prosperity of Canada and the prosperity of its railways are interdependent; that great things have already been achieved by these railways and that still greater are in sight. He recognizes the duty of the state as a model employer of labor, and he believes that adequate wages return to the state in the form of loyalty and good service. He gestures emphatically when he says that there must be no political interference, and he declares that he only accepted the position as head of the Canadian systems on the assurance that there would be none. The Hon. George P. Graham has made a similar statement. There is every evidence that the National Lines are to be given a fair chance not only to make good—for they have already done that—but to "make better."

The process may involve heartburnings. Sir Henry declares that "the first thing to do is to hammer the different railway entities into one physical system." It is conceivable that in this hammering process certain lines may be hammered out of existence altogether. But if the National Railways find themselves with two lines serving a district which is never likely to have business for more than one, the economical course is to dispense with the road which is the less desirable. When this is attempted, the danger of political influence will be quite as great as in the securing of positions for friends of men powerful in the Dominion administration.

It is heartening to find that Sir Henry has thought of his English employes as "his boys," and that they have been proud to be so considered. A similar esprit de corps is essential to the success of the Canadian National Lines. The man who has inspired that spirit in the Old Land should have no difficulty in fostering it in the New.

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