

of the Interior, who was handling the Bill, what was the purpose of leaving this clause so that the Government might dispose of the stock, he said that there was an arrangement with some of the holders of Canadian Northern debenture stock who might wish to exchange it for stock of the company. In the first place I do not believe that the people of Canada want to divide the control of the Canadian National railways with any person. We have this railway system now; we have an opportunity of testing out public ownership of railways, and until the people of Canada decide that they cannot manage this system, the stock of the Canadian National railway company should be vested absolutely in the hands of the Government, and no part of it should be disposed of until the matter is brought before this Parliament. The acting Prime Minister the other day, in making a speech in which he intimated that there was obstruction, stated, in reply to a question, that the press of Canada was with him. He said:

We practically have all the press now. The press of the country is above all things an intelligent press, and it is inconceivable that it should not strongly support this Union Government.

I do not know whether he meant in its every action or not, but presumably he meant in connection with the railways. I have here a clipping from the Toronto Globe and also one from the Montreal Star, two reasonably respectable journals of this country, two journals that are supporting Union Government in most of its legislation, but they are not altogether convinced that the action of the Government in connection with the National railway is the best for the country. The Toronto Globe, of April 30, says in an editorial:

The people are restive and apprehensive when they learn that Mr. Z. A. Lash, K.C., was engaged by the Government of Canada to draft legislation for the National railways, and that although the original Mackenzie and Mann are no longer doing contracting work for the Canadian Northern railway, there are still gentlemen of the same name operating as the Northern Construction company. There would be more confidence in the intention of the Government to make a real fight for the creation of an efficient National Railway System were one or two outstanding advocates of public ownership given seats on the National Board and a conspicuously efficient member of the Grand Trunk operating staff chosen as principal assistant to Mr. Hanna. There is no reason why the officials of the defunct Canadian Northern should crowd all others off the public ownership bench. If they continue to do so, there will inevitably be bred in the public mind the suspicion that public ownership is merely camouflage for the same old crowd of promoters and contractors operating in the same old way.

[Mr. Cahill.]

The Toronto Globe is, by the way, an ardent advocate of public ownership. The Montreal Star, which is, I believe, opposed to public ownership and in favour of private ownership, says under date of April 28:

Why the rush? Sir Thomas White, the Acting Premier of Canada (by the way, when is Sir Robert coming home?), declares that the Government is pledged unalterably to public ownership of railways and that public ownership has come to stay.

It says further on:

Sir Thomas White and Mr. Rowell broadly insinuate that the Canadian Pacific railway's fear of public ownership is the main-spring behind all movements in opposition to their socialistic policy.

Per contra, many men are beginning to wonder what is the pressure behind this anxious haste to involve the country in new railway obligations, at this time of financial and industrial crisis. Once it was "Cox can't wait." Who is it who is in such a hurry now?

That, I think, expresses pretty generally the sentiment of the people of this country. The Canadian people are, I believe, in favour of the nationalization of this railway; they are in favour of efficient management of this railway. Many people believe that if this railway is efficiently managed, it will be in a position in the near future, when we get more immigration into Canada to develop the land, to decrease western freight rates and freight rates generally throughout Canada.

Since this road has come into the hands of the Government the rates have been increased, and we have been spending large sums of money without any detailed information as to the purposes of the expenditure. There is no doubt that the people will get tired of this kind of thing and there is absolutely no doubt that they will hold the Government accountable—accountable to the extent that they will vote them out, perhaps at the next election. But that is not soon enough to save the railway situation for the people of Canada, and unless the Government are willing to lay all their cards on the table and give this House all the information that has been asked for there will be a suspicion in the minds of a great many people in this country that they are not treating this question fairly and honestly; and once there is that suspicion there will be inefficiency in the management and lack of co-operation among the people of this country. This undertaking has every possibility of success; it is already owned by the people and if the people are satisfied that the money they are paying in passenger and freight