

The Address

Transportation in Canada, made by Sir H. L. Drayton and Mr. W. M. Acworth. I think the former gentleman is the hon. member who sits to the left of the leader of the Opposition. What does the hon. member for West York (Sir Henry Drayton) say in that report? To quote from page 10:

In 1901, with a population of 5,371,315, Canada had 18,140 miles of railway in operation; roughly a mile of railway for every 300 inhabitants. In 1911, the population had increased 34 per cent to 7,206,643, while the mileage had increased by 40 per cent to 25,400 miles; a mile of railway to every 284 inhabitants. Since 1911—

Which was the time that the Administration, of which my right hon. friend later became a member, took office,—

Since 1911 the population has, it is understood, not much increased, but the railway mileage open and under construction has grown to 40,584 miles. In other words, Canada has to-day—

That is, 1919.

—taking the present population as 7,500,000, only 185 inhabitants to support each mile of railway.

In addition to that statement I have also here the evidence of a gentleman who was called before the Select Standing Committee on Canadian National Railways and Shipping at the last session of Parliament, the evidence of Mr. A. J. Mitchell, one of the directors, and vice-president, of the Board of Management of the Canadian Northern Railway system. At page 107 of the report of that committee the following appears from his evidence:

For the year ending June 30th, 1914, the Canadian Northern Railway system had an operating mileage of 4,563 miles, with gross earnings of \$23,781,328. Last year, for 1920, the mileage was 9,788 miles in operation, and the gross earnings were \$68,541,393. In other words, there was over double the mileage in 1920 that there was in 1914. To be exact, 5,225 miles were added to the Canadian Northern Railway for operation since June 30th, 1914.

Let my right hon. friend reflect that 1914 was the year the war commenced. Then, if at any time, we should have ceased railway building. He will surely begin to see the extent of the responsibility of his Government in permitting the continued building of railways. We were already over-railroaded, as my right hon. friend says, yet we continued to build to the extent of 5,225 miles. My right hon. friend fails to place responsibility for the railway situation where it properly belongs.

The position we are in to-day is due in large part to this excessive construction

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

during a period when construction should have been discontinued altogether. It is due further to the fact that the government which succeeded the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, instead of seeking to carry out in a sympathetic way the large vision which prompted the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific, a vision which foresaw a great national highway connecting the waters of the Atlantic with those of the Pacific in a manner which would serve to unite this country, industrially, politically and commercially,—instead of seeking to realize that vision sympathetically, the government of which my right hon. friend was a member did all in its power to make that project a failure.

My right hon. friend had a good deal to say this afternoon as to the success of government operation depending upon who was administering national affairs. I could not help thinking that at the time he was speaking of the fulness of his heart and knowledge. He has had to do with the administration of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the other railways and he knows, perhaps better than anyone else in Canada, how a road can be made a failure if you do not wish to make it a success. So far as this Administration is concerned, I will not for one moment accept any of the insinuations or suspicions of my right hon. friend in regard to its intentions in administering the national railroads. We intend to give government ownership of the National system, which as the Speech from the Throne states now extends through all the provinces, the fairest trial under auspices the most favourable it is possible for a government to secure. We go into it with all sincerity and in the hope that we may make it a success. I will say with perfect candour that there are hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, as I know there are hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, who doubt very much whether public ownership can be made the success which private ownership might. But there are others who believe that it can be made a success, and so far as it is possible for this Government to demonstrate what can be done under government ownership, it is our intention to see that it is done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend had something to say in regard to the marketing of wheat. He took exception to the fact that there was no mention in the Speech from the Throne of the method which the Government proposed to adopt as respects marketing facilities for this