

be to squander the reserves of the company in any such competition. But, I say, let them go on; I do not think that the National system need have any fears.

I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the Canadian National Railway system is the greatest institution of its kind in the world to-day. It is made up of the Grand Trunk, now seventy years old, the old Canadian Northern, the Mackenzie and Mann Northern, the Transcontinental, and many other roads that have been taken in; and this National system to-day has the marked characteristic of possessing almost the entire strategic advantage of transportation from one coast of Canada to the other. It possesses everything on the St. Lawrence, in the old city of Quebec and in Montreal. It comes to lake Ontario by the St. Lawrence route and has all the strategy of position at Toronto and Hamilton. It commands particularly the strategy of the Niagara river and the Detroit river, it has the sites of bridges and tunnels, it has much of the land along these shores, and it possesses wharves and everything of that kind. Similarly, it enjoys all advantages of this kind along the Welland canal to lake Erie and the upper lakes. Now I come to the right-of-way, and I will say for Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as I have always said, that in the building of the Transcontinental railway there was accomplished the greatest piece of railway strategy on the North American continent. The Transcontinental railway built by the Laurier government from the city of Quebec to Winnipeg is a splendid stretch of railway. It has the best grade in America and is on a height of land from which the water runs to Hudson bay on the north and on the south to the lower lakes. It has, I believe, a better grade than any other road on the American continent; and besides this, it has the whole strategy, so far as transportation is concerned, in crossing the Rocky mountains through the Yellowhead pass. So that I am convinced that the Canadian National railway system is bound to be a great success. To-day it is in the hands of excellent men who understand the railway question and most of whom are Canadians; and I believe they are getting a fair opportunity from the government to work out a solution of the problem before them.

The road has been making some deficits, and this fact is constantly brought up against public ownership. But as a Canadian I declare that the roads we have taken over are going to be a great success. They are going to solve the transportation problem of this country, and I have no doubt about their future. I

have faith in my country and believe that we are going to surmount the difficulties that have followed in the wake of the war; and one of the greatest means by which we shall recover from the war will be the development of our transcontinental railway system owned by the people.

We have spent a great deal of public money in making waterways in Canada and these are of course complementary of the railways. The two can be utilized together and in that way I am sure they could be more efficient than the Canadian Pacific Railway; and perhaps some day when the air-ways have been sufficiently developed they will be able to work in conjunction with the dual system of the waterways and the railways. Altogether, the people of the West and of the East, being, I believe, of the opinion that the National Railways are a valuable asset to this country, I entertain the hope that they will soon make good. But I think there is room for the Canadian Pacific Railway as well. And if the Canadian Pacific Railway is wise, some day perhaps it will see its way to become a part of the National system. There is no reason for the separate existence of the two, except the reason advanced by some of my friends from the West, that they desire competition between the two systems. Be that as it may, I believe that some day the two roads will have to be consolidated.

And now that I have spoken of these two examples of railways, one an instance of most successful private ownership, the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the other an example of a publicly owned system of railways which I am sure is going to be successful in the near future, I desire to take up the question of the merits of the company-owned road which is being lauded so much in this country, in the press and elsewhere. As a matter of fact the greatest wreckage since the war, and not caused by the war, has occurred in connection with the American system of company-owned railways. These have been absolutely scrapped. Even the private roads of Great Britain are in very bad shape, but the private systems in America are absolutely at the end of their tether to-day. They have three great tasks before them, namely, first, the reconstruction of all their tracks; secondly, the electrifying of their motive power; and last the re-equipment of their rolling stock. They cannot get money, because the public have no confidence in them, and the United States congress has by legislation directed the railway commission over there to put a valuation on all these roads. Further, congress has provided for the consolidation of the roads into ten regional divisions, the weak roads along