

A VETERAN JOURNALIST.

Mr. John Hawkes is a veteran Conservative Journalist of the Northwest Territories, and in the past has advocated the Conservative policy, very eloquently, from scores of platforms. Knowing, however, the need of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, and that his opinion was shared by his neighbours, he took the responsibility of writing a letter to the press, furnishing reasons why the people of the Territories, irrespective of politics, should support this national enterprise. In order that every one shall judge for himself the cogency of the reasons he gives, they are reproduced here, as follows:

The inhabitants of the Territories would be justified in welcoming the Grand Trunk if for one reason only. That reason, which stands out, to my mind, in bold and convincing relief, is that not one of the burdens or abuses which the Territories have complained of in the C. P. R. charter are to be found in the Grand Trunk proposal.

If the Territories were asked to contribute of the remaining wild lands to the Grand Trunk, then might we well pause, and ask ourselves whether we were not paying too great a price for the road. But the Territories do not give an acre. There is no cash bonus; and the Territories do not give a dollar. We shall have the Grand Trunk with spur lines and branch lines opening up the country north and south of it; we shall have the evil spell of monopoly and one-road ascendancy broken absolutely without any first cost to ourselves. With another outlet to the two oceans, and the control of the rates in the hands of the Government, should we not be even as the ass that brayeth, if we troubled ourselves very much about the Intercolonial, or hybridization, or any such secondary matters? Truly we should.

If there were any exemption from taxes we might have cause to kick vigorously. But there is no tax exemption. The Grand Trunk will come in as a great taxpayer. It will contribute its share to the expense of schools and roads and bridges. Instead of being a legalized pirate, preying on the labor of the people, it will be a help to school districts, local improvement districts, and to towns and villages. This seems to me an important consideration; and who in the Territories would like to assume the responsibility of keeping out this company, which will help develop the country as a ratepayer as well as a common carrier.

If the Grand Trunk were receiving a cash bonus, then we in the Territories might complain, and say we had given enough of our lands to the C. P. R. and other railroads, without paying a toll of cash to the Grand Trunk. But, as before said, the Territories pay not one dollar.

If the Grand Trunk were coming into the Territories with power to impose whatever rates it chose on the people of the Territories, then I would indeed be the first to call a halt, till the people had protection. But the Grand Trunk will not be like the C. P. R. It will not have a free hand and a cloudy charter under which it can demand whatever tale of brick it chooses to levy. There will be Government control of rates.

If the Grand Trunk were coming in with a monopoly of any kind, we might well consider whether we had not just cause to look with suspicion on its advent. But it has no monopoly. No disallowance agitation will ever be necessary.

The Grand Trunk Pacific will, in my humble opinion, be a boon to Canada at large, and to no part of Canada more than to the Territories. As an old resident of the Territories, I welcome it as the best and most encouraging event that has ever crossed the horizon of the prairie country; and if I might venture one word of advice to my fellow-residents in the Territories, it is that they study the matter on its merits, and refuse to allow any mere question of party to influence them when the development, and to a large extent the whole future, of the Territories are in the balance.

For if we do not get this road, what else is there in sight that will do one tithe as much for us as we may reasonably expect from this new trunk road.