

always been optimistic as to the future of Canada. We acknowledge that the resources of the North-west Territories alone are sufficient for the building up of a nation. We recognize that we have in that great country over 194,000,000 acres of land, equal to the area of Great Britain and France, two of the richest countries in Europe. We recognize that of this vast area only 1,000,000 acres were under crop last year. So that practically only one acre in every 200 has come under the domain of the plough; only one-half of one per cent of the soil of the territories has yet borne a crop; and yet that comparatively small area last year yielded a very large crop both of wheat and other cereals. I say we have recognized that, and the Conservative party are ready and always have been ready to meet such occasions in the proper spirit and in the proper manner; and when the government announced through the Governor General that 'the whole question of transportation and terminal facilities continues to occupy much attention, and my government will immediately appoint a commission of experienced men to report on the subject,' we on this side of the House considered that the government were taking the proper step. When we heard the address of His Excellency the Governor General, we could find no word therein in regard to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, or any other great transcontinental line. If it had been the intention of the government on March 12 to enter into an enterprise of this sort, to enter into an expenditure which is estimated to cost the country from \$100,000,000 to \$120,000,000, that should have been foreshadowed in the speech from the Throne. But there is not one word in the speech from the Throne which could give any hint or idea that the government intended taking up the question of a great transcontinental line.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I intend just for a moment to follow up what occurred from the 12th day of March. On May 19 the Privy Council submitted recommendations to the Governor General for His Excellency's approval. Although these have been quoted before in this debate, I think it is well for me to call attention to one or two points in them:

The minister submits that it may be assumed that grain and other products will naturally seek their markets by the cheapest routes, and therefore the method of attaining the object desired should be to make the Canadian routes cheaper and more convenient than competing routes.

The minister further states that the questions to be considered are complicated and involved, including among the objects to be sought the transportation of western products from place of production to the markets of the world.

This involves the consideration of their transportation:—

From place of production to Canadian seaports.

From place of production to the western ports of Lake Superior.

Mr. PRINGLE.

From the western ports of Lake Superior to Canadian seaports.

From Canadian seaports to Europe.

From place of production through Canadian ports on the Pacific.

As it affects the products of the eastern provinces of Canada it invokes their movement:—

To the seaports.

From the seaports to Europe.

It is obvious that before any satisfactory conclusion can be reached upon these questions a thorough and comprehensive inquiry should be made regarding:—

The conditions of original shipment and the possibilities of improvement in the conditions surrounding such shipments.

The storage requirements of lake, river and ocean ports.

The harbour facilities of the inland lakes, rivers and Atlantic and Pacific ports.

The conditions with regard to the navigation of the St. Lawrence route, and, generally, any improvement, enlargements, or other matters affecting the more economical and satisfactory uses of any Canadian channel of transportation by land or water.

The minister further states that in making such investigation attention should not be confined to routes and facilities which are at present utilized, but, if necessary, new surveys should be made to determine whether any more economical and satisfactory channels of transportation by land or water can be opened up.

The forces operating against the attainment of all Canadian transport, namely:—

Competition by United States railways;

Competition by United States vessels from Lake Superior ports;

Diversion of Canadian products through eastern outlets to Boston, Portland and other United States ports, should be investigated, and the best and most economical methods used by our competitors should be carefully studied and reported upon.

The minister apprehends that in these circumstances it devolves upon the Dominion government to consider and adopt the best possible means of promoting such measures as may enable Canada to control the transportation of its own products, and it is thought that the most efficient method of conducting such an inquiry and obtaining the required information is by means of a commission of competent and experienced experts who may be appointed and authorized under the provisions of chapter 114 of the Revised Statutes of Canada.

To that report the Conservative party took no exception. They consider that the government were taking the proper means to solve the transportation problem; but shortly after this address of the 19th of May, we heard rumours of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway scheme. Application was made to parliament for extension of the Grand Trunk Railway from North Bay west. A Bill to incorporate the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway subsequently came before this House and the Railway Committee. The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway had no intention whatever of building from Moncton to Quebec nor of extending from Quebec westward to North Bay. What they required was the right to build from North Bay westward, but for political reasons these other portions of the road were tacked on to the scheme. So late