

between the east and the west—which I hope some day, so far as the northern part of it is concerned, may answer the expectations of hon. gentlemen on both sides who have addressed the House, and may become a prosperous and thickly settled country—is bridged over in the winter by the Canadian Pacific Railway. That railway, from Fort William to North Bay, is a line which doubtless could be improved, which has cost a great deal of money, and upon which some more money might advantageously be expended. The grades, I understand, are not bad; the curves are in many respects very favourable, but could be remedied at no very great expense. This railway undoubtedly is capable of carrying five times, or perhaps, with the improvements I have suggested, ten times the traffic which is carried over it at present. I say it would be a proper thing and a wise thing for this government to acquire that railway from North Bay to Fort William and make it a national highway of Canada, and operate it by means of an independent commission giving to the Grand Trunk Pacific, the Canadian Northern and the Intercolonial as well as the Canadian Pacific Railway equal running powers over it. I say that for this reason, that to build two railways or three railways where one railway, with running rights over it, will answer the same purpose, is economic waste. By the acquisition of this railway you can put the Grand Trunk Railway, one of the great railway systems of Ontario, into direct touch with the commercial life and development of the west inside of six months. For the purpose which I have suggested, the government can acquire either full ownership of that railway or the absolute control of running powers over it.

It may be suggested by some hon. gentleman on the other side of the House that what I propose is impracticable. I say it is not impracticable; and I have talked this question over with many railway men who are more familiar with the subject, I think, than any gentleman in this House, with the possible exception of my hon. friend from South Lanark (Hon. Mr. Haggart), who has given these subjects a great deal of attention. It is difficult to give to one railway effective running powers over a line which is under the

control of another and competing railway.

But if the government acquires this railway from North Bay to Fort William, it can establish and maintain an independent control over it and give to these three railways exactly equal running powers over it for which they shall pay in proportion to their user on a wheelage basis; and that object can be accomplished, as I have been informed by railway men, the highest in the country, without any difficulty and without any friction whatever.

I would not for one moment suggest that anything should be done that would break the continuity of a great transcontinental highway like the Canadian Pacific Railway. But this would not break the continuity of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company at the present time owns that road, which has only one-fifth or one-tenth of the traffic it can carry. If you give to the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk, in common with the Canadian Pacific, equal running powers over that line, you will increase its traffic to some extent, but for many years to come you will have an avenue for all the trade that will be carried from the east to the west by means of a railway. You will not only bring the Grand Trunk immediately into touch with the commercial life of the west, and with it every village and town of Ontario, but you will also bring the west, by means of the Canadian Northern, into direct touch with the villages and towns of Ontario. I regard the Canadian Northern as being as much entitled to the status of a transcontinental railway as the Grand Trunk Pacific. Its object and aim has been to reach the Pacific coast, and its object and aim must be also to reach the Atlantic coast; and having received running powers over the Canadian Pacific Railway from Fort William to North Bay, there is no reason why that railway should not at an early day be extended to the shores of the Atlantic. Already it has a line under construction to the town of Edmonton; and with regard to a line from there to some further point in the west, I will give you my views before I sit down.

I have suggested the extension of the Intercolonial to the Georgian Bay. If we should acquire the Canada Atlantic Railway, we could build a line from that point or more probably from Scotia Junction to join the Canadian Pacific Railway at or