

amalgamation and the betterment of that system, and in the reduction of its deficits. All that has been done has been ruthlessly to oust them from power and place in office some of the favourites of hon. gentlemen opposite. This question is of real and practical consequence because of its bearing on a larger subject to which I will refer later in my address. This country is not to-day getting the advantages that it ought to get from the unification of the railways it owns. On the contrary, it is suffering under a burden which it has no right to bear, because of the wholly unjustified delay, a delay now extending over thirteen months. There has been no cause for one of two months' duration, on the part of the present government. What may be the loss it is very difficult, of course, to say. But I do not think that any railway expert would place it under \$10,000,000 per year. What is more, I observe that the government has made commitments in relation to the purchase of equipment and supplies aggregating, so the report would indicate, from \$12,000,000 to \$20,000,000, at least not less than the lower figure; and this for equipment and supplies, the necessity for which would seem to me to be very doubtful indeed, were the advantages of amalgamation first brought about. I am unable to understand why these large engagements should be made on behalf of this country before we know what the requirements are as the result of a survey, a survey that can be made only when amalgamation is effected. But I have another objection to these commitments. What authority did the government have from this parliament sanctioning commitments of between \$12,000,000 and \$20,000,000 for equipment? I am not aware that authority was asked for, much less granted, at the last session of parliament. All these matters had been reviewed and should have been included in the estimates of a year ago. There is no excuse whatever for commitments in between, commitments that could not have arisen because of circumstances unforeseen. If the need was there, then the need was known to the directors in the spring of 1922, and I doubt not if the directors and the general manager felt that those commitments were necessary they would have laid before the administration estimates covering the same, and parliament would have had the right to decide whether they were necessary. That was not done. We have since gone through a transport season, perhaps the largest in the history of the country, involving the carriage of grain to the extent of three-quarters of one hundred million bushels more, I think,

than was ever transported before. That was done, it is true, mainly under the late management, but wholly without complaint as to car shortage or equipment shortage, so far as I heard. Besides this, earlier in the season large bodies of equipment were altogether unused. Consequently it seems to me that the government has some explanations to make to the House as to why they have joined with the new directors in binding the country to millions of expenditure without the authority of parliament.

May I also mention an ingredient of the pledge of a year ago, as to the fulfilment of which we have no word and no assurance? It will be recalled that in the Speech from the Throne of a year ago when the promise of co-ordination was given, His Excellency was made to say that that co-ordination was to be accompanied by a thorough inquiry in order that the people of Canada would at last know the real inside financial facts of the National Railway system. Has that thorough inquiry taken place? If so, by whom was it conducted? In the speech of the former minister, made later in the session, it was intimated that inquiry would be made by a body of men specially appointed for the purpose by the board of directors. Has that inquiry taken place at all? If it has, what is the result? Has it been found that the facts disclosed previously were in any way coloured, in any way misleading, in any way incomplete? If it has been made, the House should have known ere this what the result of the inquiry was. I venture to say it was one of those alluring manifestoes that are made only to be forgotten.

The other subject that is repeated this year from the sessional programme of the year before is the subject of immigration. In the Speech from the Throne of 1922 the House was informed that immigration had been necessarily neglected during the war, that there had been naturally a falling off of immigrants, but that now the blessing of peace had come the government was alive to the need of an aggressive immigration policy and was immediately addressing itself to the formulation of same. This time the Speech from the Throne says that they are still impressed with the need of an active and effective immigration policy, and that their belief is that the efforts of the government should be specially directed to acquiring United States and British immigrants. I can quite understand that the government would feel the country in need of some renewed assurance on this subject. We have had a number of speeches in the interim in various parts of