

it will be teeming with activity, as we know. Already there are three lines of railway, the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Great Northern and the Canadian Northern; and this one will be still another. Other roads are also going to be built there to meet the increasing wants of the people. The Canadian Pacific Railway has its exit on the north shore of Lake Superior; those other railways have no exit. It is our intention that this road shall be kept and maintained under our supervision, so that all railways may get the benefit of it, so that the Canadian people may not be compelled to build another road across that section of country. This is the reason why we have adopted a policy which I shall supplement later on by other explanations.

Now, I will be asked: Why do you not retain also the western section? Why do you not continue building by the government the railway from Winnipeg to the Pacific ocean? We came to the conclusion to have that railway built and operated by a company for the reason that we do not believe, under existing circumstances, and for many years, perhaps for many generations to come, it will be possible, with such activity as may be developed in that section of the country, successfully to operate it as a government road. I may be biased and prejudiced on this question. I formed my opinions some years ago, and perhaps I may be permitted to relate a personal experience which went far to form my own conviction in this regard. In the fall of 1896, Mr. J. R. Booth, of this city, invited me to visit his railway, the Canada Atlantic Railway, which was then in process of construction. I accepted the invitation. The road had been built almost to the shores of the Georgian bay, perhaps within half a mile of it. When we left the train we walked to the shore of the lake, a bleak shore with not a building upon it. Mr. Booth said: this is the terminus of my railway. I asked Mr. Booth: Where is the trade to come from? His answer was: 'I have to create it, I have to collect it from Port Arthur, from Duluth, from Chicago and from both sides of the lakes. I will have to build elevators, I will perhaps have to buy wheat in order to furnish trade to my railway.' Then, I say, it dawned upon me that no government under such a condition of things, with everything to create, could successfully operate a railway in a new country like that. When this railway is taken to Port Simpson, there will be the same thing which I found on the Georgian bay in 1896—a bleak shore with nothing upon it. Everything will have to be created. Wharfs, warehouses and sheds will have to be built, elevators will have to be provided, branch lines will have to be constructed, possibly hotels may have to be built and managed, steamships will have to be built or chartered and trade will have to be brought from all points of Asia. Would any one tell me that government

management, under such circumstances, could do justice to the undertaking in such a big question as that? Would any one tell me that the management, even were we to put it in the hands of a commission responsible to parliament, having to come here for appropriations for this and for that, would have that elasticity which would be a condition essential to the successful management of such a road? Would parliament be willing to give power to the Minister of Railways and Canals, or to the commission, to build or acquire steamships, or would parliament give power to send agents across to the coast of Asia, to Japan, to China and elsewhere to collect trade? Would parliament, in its disposition, as I have known it for many years, be willing to give the government power to go into the business of hotel keeping and hotel building? I doubt it, and for all these reasons we have come to the conclusion that it is better and preferable in every possible way that such a railway should be built and operated by a private company. Now, I shall come to this subject again, at a later period in my remarks.

It is about time that I should touch upon another branch of the subject. An accusation has been made against us, which, perhaps, may have caused some uneasiness and trepidation among those who do us the honour to give us their support in this House and out of it, and which would have been serious enough if there had been in it any basis of truth. But, I am happy to say that for that charge as for many others, there is not even a shadow of foundation. It has been stated and restated in all possible tones from the plaintive wail to the indignant protest that we are launching into railway construction of gigantic magnitude through a country of which we know absolutely nothing, and without taking the usual elementary precaution of having a previous exploration. I say again there is not a shadow of truth in this charge as I shall show later on. But, before I proceed any further, let me say that the conception which we have of this work which we are now contemplating is very different from the conception entertained of it by some of our critics. Most of our critics look upon this scheme simply as a commercial venture to be judged by the only rule of profit and loss. We look upon it as a work of a national character necessitated by the status of Canada in the year 1903, just as the Intercolonial Railway was necessitated by the status of Canada at the opening of confederation, and just as the Canadian Pacific Railway was necessitated by the status of Canada a few years after confederation. Sir, when the conference met in 1864 which laid down the basis of confederation, it passed a resolution affirming the necessity of the immediate construction of the Intercolonial Railway. It passed this resolution without waiting to have surveys