

should be paid to take it, there is an arbitration sitting in the good city of Montreal to decide how much money we will pay for it.

On the 13th of April last the Grand Trunk railway, by being dilatory, actually lost the option to sell the railway; and when that was known there was joy throughout the land of Canada. We expected that the Government would have taken advantage of their opportunity, and would have permitted the law to take its course, and that this question, like that of any other bankrupt railway, would have been taken to the Exchequer Court, in accordance with the excellent law which we have on the statute book, put there by the honourable gentleman from De Salaberry (Hon. Mr. Bériquet), and that the preferred creditors would have been paid whatever the road would bring when sold under the public hammer. There is no doubt that nobody would have bid very much. I do not believe that the road would have brought enough to pay its bonds and debts. Still, there is an arbitration sitting in the city of Montreal to determine what the taxpayers of this country are to pay for a railroad which is a public charge, and of which 1,600 miles are in the United States.

How is His Majesty the King going to operate a railroad in a foreign land when, in the legislature of every State which it traverses, there will be people who are inimical to England and to the British Empire? I see the Minister of Labour looking at me. No one knows better than he how difficult it will be to operate that railway; how, at every turn, the operation of the road will be hampered. Thank God, we are good friends with the United States. The vast majority of the people of the United States are in sympathy with the British Empire; but friction may arise at any moment, and there are two large elements in the United States that are far from friendly, both of which have representatives in every State.

I say it is dangerous to this country to undertake the operation of railways in the United States. In my view, honourable gentlemen, these railways have not been paying their way. The Vermont Central railway, for one, has had a huge deficit, and most of the other roads, including the one running to Grand Haven, in the State of Michigan, have not paid their way. Many of the railroads in the United

States to-day are not paying their way, and the ones that I have mentioned are not the best of them.

Why the Government should persist in buying the Grand Trunk railway is more than I can understand. Some years ago—it will be four years next fall—the Canadian Pacific Railway Company were told that they should intervene and prevent the purchase by the Government of the Canadian Northern railway. They were told that surely they must have friends in this House, even if they had lost all their friends in the other House; and that if they had only two or three friends here they should prevent the Canadian Northern deal going through. The taking over of that railway is one of the reasons why we are in such financial straits to-day. The Canadian Pacific railway have only got themselves to blame. If they had exercised their influence at that time things might be different, and that nefarious transaction might have been prevented. That Bill was run parallel with the Conscription Act, and so anxious were the promoters of the scheme that, in spite of the great necessity there was supposed to be for conscription, in spite of the fact that men were dying in France, the Railway Bill was run through both Houses of Parliament in less than a month, while the Conscription Bill took three months. Our boys were being killed, but before help could be sent to them we had to buy the Canadian Northern railway. That policy, honourable gentlemen, has been more disastrous financially than the Great War. The Great War has come to an end, and the interest on our war debts is not as large an amount as the deficits on that railway; and when we add the Grand Trunk the burden will be 150 per cent greater. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company have no one to blame but themselves. If they had used their influence at the time they would have been able to prevent that deal going through.

While talking about the Canadian Pacific railway I might allude to Lord Shaughnessy's plan. Lord Shaughnessy's plan unfortunately did not create a ripple of excitement in another place, and in this House we gave it, two days ago, a very quiet funeral. Oh, it was a lovely little burial. The pallbearers were few, but select. There were no mourners. The friends had not been invited, and at the grave the attendance was meagre. There were no flowers, and it went and passed away. Let the dead rest in peace—requiescat in pace—Amen.