

on the Intercolonial and to oppose the idea of Government ownership, control and operation of railroads in this country. Some fifteen years ago, when I and others in the Maritime Provinces, asked for subsidies for the national railways of the Maritime Provinces, we were met by a condemnation of Government operated railroads on the part of hon. members opposite. But they have suddenly become strong supporters of Government operation. It was only when circumstances compelled them to reverse their attitude that they favoured Government ownership of railways. I remain consistent and persistent, as I have been during my life. The Minister of Railways and Canals knows my persistence and perseverance, my only virtue, and he knows that they have at times enabled me to reach my objective. I wish I could by persistence, impress my view upon the mind of the minister so that he could, in turn, impress it upon the mind of the Board of Management and induce them to reverse their policy and if necessary, to reverse the policy of the Conservative party as regards railways in times past because I believe—and these few remarks which I am going to make on the railway situation are inspired by honesty of purpose and vision—that if the policy of Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the building of this Transcontinental railway from Winnipeg to Quebec and the Maritime ports of St. John and Halifax had been put into effect with the view which he had in mind, we would not be confronted to-day with one-half the deficit that we have. That road was constructed with a view to a certain trade and more particularly to secure that cheapness of operation which is necessary in order that the products of the West may be brought over Canadian lines to Canadian ports instead of being diverted to American ports. My conviction—and I speak my conviction and nothing else—is that had that policy been carried out, we would not be in the situation in which we are. The West was at that time the great promise of the future of Canada, and we had to prepare for the shipment of its products. The West was that part of Canada which alone could become the granary of the world, more particularly of the British Empire, because the Prairie Provinces alone could produce the grain requirements not only of Canada and the British Empire, but of the world, as was proved during the last few years, more particularly during the war. It is, therefore, important that we should keep within our own chan-

nels, not only the export of the grain from the Prairie Provinces through Quebec, St. John and Halifax, but the return trade, both of which have gone during the last few years to American ports on account of lack of proper railway facilities for the traffic. It was to provide those facilities that the railway from Winnipeg to the Maritime Provinces was constructed. That route is 215 miles shorter than any other route. That means rapidity of transit and quicker returns for the farmer. The line has also the advantage of low insurance. This road would have been the best, not only in America, but in the world, if it had been used for the purposes for which it was intended of bringing the products of the West by rail down to the East. A train of from 60 to 75 cars could have been hauled from Winnipeg to Quebec with scarcely a stop. We all know how railroads lose time in the winter, and how they spend almost as much time at stations as in running between them. If these products had been brought from the West over the Government road it would have meant an immense saving of coal. By the time the Canadian Pacific train leaving Winnipeg has arrived at Port Arthur, the Transcontinental has reached Armstrong; by the time the grain has been transferred from the Canadian Pacific to the ship and is on its way across the lakes the Transcontinental has reached Quebec, and its load of grain is going down the St. Lawrence before the lake boat has reached Buffalo. That illustrates how much faster a route the Transcontinental is. It is a well known fact that grain should have been carried over the Transcontinental from Winnipeg to Quebec for six cents a bushel without there being any deficit on the railway. To-day, under present conditions, it can be carried for 18 cents a bushel, which is still from 6 to 8 cents a bushel cheaper than the rate to United States ports, but this trade has been lost to the country in the last four or five years. Every time we on this side of the House mention railway deficits, hon. gentlemen opposite condemn us for the construction of the Transcontinental. It is only a few days ago that I heard with regret the hon. member for Brantford (Mr. Cockshutt), a gentleman for whom I have the highest respect, say that the Transcontinental traversed a wilderness, that we had been promised mountains of information, but that nothing in that direction was to be had. I would ask him if he has travelled through that portion of the country from Winnipeg to