

country. Private companies have always been the parties of interest. But democracy in this country is now asserting to itself the right to administer the railways, to build them up and to devote them to service rather than to profit. Most criticism of public ownership comes from gentlemen who claim to be consecrated to Liberalism and democracy. Nevertheless, public ownership is coming now; it is here and with us; we have to make the best we can out of it, and I believe it is going to succeed.

Let me tell the committee another thing that will happen now that we have public ownership in connection with our railways. What is it that every little town, village and railroad station in the East and in the West wants? It is what I will call a community centre. Now that we have national railways and a station in every one of these little towns and villages, the time has come when there ought to be in every such town or village a community centre, where there will be the railway station and ticket office, the post office, the national telegraph office, and if there is a provincially-owned telephone system, it will be able to find a home in that building. That being the case, by concentrating all that business into one building at that one point, we shall have a telephone service, a railway service, a telegraph service, and all those other great public services.

Mr. BUREAU: A fire station.

Mr. MACLEAN (York South): And, perhaps, a fire station. There is the hon. gentleman criticising again; there is the professed Liberal in this country. The moment you suggest something for the benefit of the people of this country, you encourage the criticism of my hon. friend.

Mr. BUREAU: A fire station there would be the greatest protection you could have.

Mr. MACLEAN (York South): Yes, you could call the fire brigade out at any hour of the night through this community centre. I have explained what is coming through public ownership. This is the first time in the history of this country that the scattered towns and villages of the West and the towns and villages of Ontario and Quebec are going to have those community centres. This will be similar to what the French call the department of communications which embraces railways, telegraphs, post offices and telephones, all being concentrated in one centre and owned by the people.

I want to speak just for a moment in regard to the railway station in the city of

[Mr. W. F. Maclean.]

Toronto. I referred to the matter in the House, but I was able to do so only by way of asking a question of the Government. I want to call the attention of the Government to the fact that a great deal of money has been spent in Toronto by what is called the Terminals Company for the erection of a new union station in that city. That Terminals Company is made up of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and the old Grand Trunk Railway Company. They have built a fine station at Toronto, and the Government have come in with them and become partners by securing the whole east wing of that new union station for a public post office to handle and distribute outgoing and incoming mail. That building has been completed, and it has cost up to date between two and three million dollars. The biggest contributors up to date are the people of Canada, and yet the Board of Railway Commissioners has issued an order that railways going into that new station shall elevate their track. This can only be done at an enormous cost including land damages that may involve thirty or forty million dollars, and by reason of that order of the board, we cannot get the use of that station or its facilities, nor of that magnificent new post office that we have built there for the distribution of outgoing and incoming mail. The old union station in Toronto is the worst station in Canada, and yet several weeks after the new union station has been practically completed, we cannot get the use of it. I want to say to the Minister of Railways that he should immediately, on behalf of the railway system of this country, ask the Board of Railway Commissioners to suspend that order in regard to those elevated tracks. We cannot at the present time get the money necessary to elevate those tracks, and we do not want to have to pay the enormous damages that the elevation of those tracks would call for. Therefore, I think the Government, and especially the Minister of Railways, ought to ask for a suspension of that order so that that splendid station may be used not only by the people of Toronto, but by any one who may go there from other parts of the country. Having put all this money into that new union station, we shall have there the Grand Trunk, the Canadian Pacific, the Canadian Northern, and the Intercolonial if they wish to come that far, and we shall be only too glad to see them run into Toronto, using that new station. I am sure hon. members from Toronto will support me in saying that if that new station is completed and if it is held up in its use