

demn and punish if practised by our own railroads.

I regret that circumstances prevented an earlier examination by me of these questions, but submit now these views in the hope that they may lead to a revision of the laws upon a safer and juster basis.

Fortunately, Sir, up to this moment, we have escaped the danger with which, on repeated occasions, we have been threatened. But, Sir, what would happen if at any moment there should come one of those frenzies, one of those periods of excitement which we have seen sometimes amongst nations, the American nation included? At any moment we may be deprived of the bonding privilege which we have had up to the present. The only way whereby we can contemplate such a contingency with equanimity is to provide against it, and to have upon our own territory all the facilities by which we can get access to our own harbours. Sir, our relations to-day with our American neighbours are friendly; they were never more so, and I hope they will so continue. For my part—I never made any secret of it—I have the greatest possible admiration for the American people. I have always admired their many strong qualities. But I have found in the short experience during which it has been my privilege and my fortune to be placed at the head of affairs, by the will of the Canadian people, that the best and most effective way to maintain friendship with our American neighbours is to be absolutely independent of them. These are the reasons why we apply to parliament to give its countenance to the policy which I have outlined, a policy which will give to this new Transcontinental Railway its terminals in our own harbours, and an all-Canadian route to reach them.

Now, Sir, let me call your attention to some of the objections taken against this proposition, which we have seen and heard in the press? They tell us: If you build this railway right through you will injure the Intercolonial. Sir, I do not admit that we would injure the Intercolonial, because I have no doubt and I submit it to the judgment, the intelligence and experience of every man in this House, that there will be trade and business enough coming from the west, not only for one road but for two roads, if not more. But, after all, I say to our friends on the north shore who may perhaps feel that the Intercolonial might be prejudiced by this new line, that there is nothing to be feared in this respect, because the new road will not prejudice the constituency which is served by the Intercolonial: the business of the new road will be created by the road itself, it will be a business which is not in existence to-day. Again, let me say this to the members of the House, and I submit it to the Canadian people as well, that even if the Intercolonial were injured to some extent, were to lose some traffic, let me

ask this question: Does the Intercolonial exist for the Canadian people or the Canadian people for the Intercolonial? Are we to be told that if we made an error we cannot correct it, if we injure somebody we cannot repair the injury? Sir, are we to be told that if we are to have traffic from the east to the west, the people of the west must not have the benefit of the shortest route, or that the people of the east must not have the benefit of this western line? No, Sir, if it comes to be a question between the management of the Intercolonial and the interest of the Canadian people, we leave the issue in perfect confidence to the judgment of the Canadian people.

Now, Sir, I have to pass to another point of this scheme. The public has been made aware already, by the correspondence which has been exchanged between myself and my hon. friend the late Minister of Railways and Canals, that it is proposed to divide this line of railway which is to extend from Moncton to the Pacific ocean, into two sections. One section, that from Moncton to Winnipeg, is to be built by the government; the other section, that from Winnipeg to the Pacific ocean, is to be built, owned and operated by a company. I know that this policy has already been the subject of much criticism. We are told that we are keeping to ourselves the unproductive portion of the road, while we are leaving to a company the productive portion of it. This criticism might have a good deal of force in it if we were ourselves to operate the line which is to be built by the government. But we have made a contract whereby this line is to be operated, not by ourselves, but by that company, which agrees to pay us a rental at the rate of three per cent per annum upon cost of construction. Therefore, let our friends on the other side of the House, and let our friends on this side of the House also, take note of this fact, that with the exception of a few years of interest, to which I shall allude later on, we shall have this portion of the railway built by the government from Moncton to Winnipeg without the cost of one dollar to the Canadian people. We shall have to advance the money, and we shall have to pay interest upon it, but we shall receive interest upon it at the same rate; so that whatever we give with one hand we shall receive back with the other. To this extent there is no risk whatever assumed by the Canadian government or the Canadian people.

But, why did we keep this section of the road in our hands? Why did we not give it to the company to build as the other section? We did it because we want to keep that section of the line which is to be the exit of the productive portion of the west, in our own hands so as to be able to regulate the traffic over it. The prairie section will be teeming with business, as we know;

Sir WILFRID LAURIER.