

of that portion of the country where you hope the business will, in course of time, develop to a paying point, why should you virtually give away, and not only that, but also substantially aid, the line through this valuable and fertile country? What are the compelling reasons? I see none, none whatever. There is no reason in the experience of the Intercolonial which will justify the inference, that such a road being owned by the government and operated by a commission, could not be made as much a success, so far as the general interests of the country are concerned. It might not yield us large dividends, because you might not develop the same large amount of business. But the people of the country—and it is the people whose interests we are supposed to consider—would be far better served, their rights would certainly be better secured, by continuing a policy of public ownership and also carrying out the principle of public operation when you come to the fertile belt, that portion of the road which is going to create traffic for you. Now, on the very threshold of this question, I make this inquiry of myself: Is there now, or is there likely to be in the immediate future, any need for our embarking on another railway through the North-western country? Are we not actually anticipating the requirements of that country by a considerable number of years? Now, the idea, if it is entertained, that the whole western country can be filled with railways, and that it will attract innumerable millions of people to fill it up at once, is not well founded. Yet that is the idea that seems to underlie this proposition. There does not seem to be any impression that you may be putting a railway into that country long before the time when it need be put there. Are you or are you not doing that? My hon. friends, if they have not information on that subject—and they cannot have it—might well have inquired into the matter. They might well advise the House as to what are the facts, and what are our own needs. Where are the men who are competent to speak who have advised this government that another railway through that country, north of the Canadian Northern, is required at this time, or that it will be required in the immediate future? I have no means of knowledge myself upon that point. But is it not a natural query to raise? How many trans-continental railways do you want to construct in one year? One has already been sanctioned. Is there no limit, or is that limit only the number of demands made upon us by influential corporations? Is that the limit? Now, that is not a proper limit, that is not a legitimate limit, that is not a limit that this parliament ought to listen to, that is not a limit that this government should respond to for one moment. The question is, whether there is real need for another road through that fertile country. I can understand that if it was thought desirable to

construct another government railway you might run it down between some of these roads that are now in existence, so as to have some effect upon their rates; but to run another railway north thirty or thirty-five miles from the first railway, will be to encroach on its territory. We ought to have evidence as to whether such a condition of things exists in that western country which renders it necessary for us to rush with headlong haste to authorize the construction at enormous cost of two lines of railway through that same country at the present time.

Now I wish to direct attention for a moment to the question of the location of this new railway. I have spoken of it as drawing to the north. I have heard it said by people who profess to know whereof they speak that the Grand Trunk Pacific have some assurance or expectation that they are going to be allowed to run south of the Canadian Northern, and through some of these other roads that are already constructed in that section. Well, if that be true, and I cannot believe it is true, I think I find evidence, conclusive evidence that it is not true—but if it is true, then I say unhesitatingly that no railway company that comes to parliament and gets a charter to construct another line between them, south of the northern line and north of the southern line, ought to get one dollar of money from the public exchequer, or one dollar of guarantee. I say it would be an outrage upon the people of Canada. After that country is beginning to be peopled, after a traffic exists in a rich country like that, if a company gets a charter, let it go in and build a railway with its own means and on its own financial strength, and not a farthing should pass from the treasury of this country in aid of its construction. If another railway was considered to be needed, it is the government that should put it there, if they are going to spend any money in railway construction at all. Now I have reasons for thinking that that cannot be so, and I will tell you why. I find this in the preamble:

Whereas, by reason of the growth in population and the rapid development in the productiveness and trade of Canada, and especially of the western part thereof, and with a view to the opening up of new territory available for settlement.

Now you see lying at the very threshold of this whole measure is this solemn declaration that the object for which these enormous responsibilities are to be assumed is to open up new territory which is now unsettled. Then it must be beyond the reach and scope of the present settlements in that country, and so this question fairly arises: I want to know, you want to know, and the country will want to know, what is the extent of the country that needs to be served by railroads and which is still unpeopled? What is the extent of that coun-