

In that respect we differ from the Argentine, where the average haul of wheat for export is perhaps not more than about 300 miles. Our haul would be several times that. The same thing is true of the activities in other lines of other countries, such as manufacturing, where the haul on the production to its point of consumption is relatively small.

The United States had at one time quite a similar problem in that most of their wheat was raised in the interior and had to be shipped almost similar distances for export; but that situation is changing because the United States, on account of the population of approximately 120,000,000 people, has established a very considerable home consumption for their own product, with a corresponding reduction in the transportation problem relating to the marketing of that production.

All of the transportation officers, irrespective of the company which happens to employ them; have, as I have said, been carrying out their responsibilities under the conditions which confront them, to the best of their ability.

In this committee and throughout Canada one frequently encounters divergence of views with respect to our transportation policy. Now, I suggest that the time has come when we should perhaps, from a national point of view, take our latitude and longitude and determine our position with respect to this large activity of transport and its relationship to the marketing of our large production, and that after determining that latitude and longitude and trying to see where we are, and taking some account of the trade winds that blow, we should endeavour from a national point of view to determine a course to be steered.

I therefore suggest, and it is only suggestive, it does not involve any action on the part of this committee whatsoever, it is only the expression of a personal thought on the part of one who has been through a good deal of anxiety and realizes, as you all do, the importance of the problem, and is trying to seek some instrumentality which will put us upon a course which will generally be recognized as sound; and I therefore purely suggest that the government should appoint a commission of men who, because of their business standing, their knowledge and experience and the confidence which the public has in them because of those attributes, to consider the transportation situation and endeavour to arrive at some definite recommendation.

That is all I have to say on the subject, gentlemen; but I would again repeat, perhaps to the point of nausea but in order that it may not be misunderstood, that in making this suggestion I have only at heart what I believe to be the welfare of the country and an earnest desire that the policies of this country with respect to transportation should be carefully, exhaustively and intelligently determined upon.

HON. MR. EULER: You are referring to the general transportation system.

SIR HENRY THORNTON: Yes. I may say that in the United States that country suffered very materially from having no transportation policy whatsoever, after the close of the Civil War, with respect to railways that were built west of the Mississippi river. Groups of individuals who saw opportunities to exploit the country, and perhaps at the same time to exploit investors, went into the field; railways were built with no regard one for the other; and the result of that operation was, that hit or miss fashion of doing things, that there was loss in capital and in interest; and those losses to the investing public of the United States to date reach the colossal sum of three billions of dollars. That is an example of what happens unless there is some sort of considered, orderly procedure.

HON. MR. EULER: Do you refer to investments in railways, Sir Henry?

SIR HENRY THORNTON: In the United States, I am referring to investments in railways; by that I mean in capital stocks and funded debts.