

D. B. Hanna on the Canadian National Railways System, Etc.

During the early part of January, D. B. Hanna, President, Canadian National Rys., spoke at several places in Ontario, including Hamilton, London, St. Thomas and the Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, Toronto. In speaking at the Stratford Chamber of Commerce dinner, he said:—

"There is no subject I know of that is of more importance than that of transportation; it is peculiarly a basic subject as far as this Canada of ours is concerned. Canada has an area of 3,729,000 square miles; a population estimated at 8,593,000, which is only equivalent to 2 persons for every square mile. In the United States there is an area of 3,056,789 square miles, and a population of 115,000,000, according to figures I received from the U.S. Consul in Toronto yesterday; so that that great country has an equivalent of 38 persons to every square mile of territory. The last census gives a population to Great Britain and Ireland of 45,400,000, with an area of 120,580 square miles, which is equivalent to a density of 377 persons to every square mile. It will be seen, therefore, that Canada has a long way to go in order to measure up to the U.S., and a much longer road to go to measure up to Great Britain and Ireland. But as regards forests, fisheries, mines, coal and other minerals, Canada is very much in excess of the U.S. In population Canada has only about 7½% that of the U.S., but in railway mileage we are about 12% of theirs. On this basis it might be argued that we have more railway mileage in operation than is absolutely necessary at present, and Canada has probably overdone herself in that regard. It must be remembered, however, that very little new mileage was added during the war, to Canada's total, and much of the intensive construction which was done prior to the war has not added a very great deal to the Dominion's wealth in industries, food production or population. A new era has now developed, and if the same courage and loyalty that permeated Canada in its imperishable war activities is directed to the pursuits of peace, we will make a far greater development than we have done in the past.

"It is not true to say that Canada has more railway mileage than is necessary. That may be true in isolated cases, but it only represents a small percentage of the total mileage constructed, where duplication has been permitted. But think of the country to the north, in both Ontario and Quebec; do not overlook the fact that there are provinces west of Ontario where there are millions of acres of land which has not yet been brought under cultivation. We know that land cannot be profitably cultivated where the haul is 50 miles from the railway, yet, due to the insistent demand for more production during the war, many farmers rose to the heart-breaking task of hauling their products to the railway, in some cases over 50 miles away. That condition cannot always continue, and therefore I say let no one imagine that railway building is over in Canada. On the contrary, I am convinced that in the years to come we are going to have as much additional mileage built as is now in operation. There will, of course, be greater judgment displayed in the building of future lines, duplication will not be permitted, and

inasmuch as there are only to be two companies competing for the new territory, a sane policy will obtain, and the country will be the gainer by it.

"My reason for saying these things is, that Canada is on the world's map as never before; immigration will begin again in a larger volume; and more than ever Great Britain and her allies will depend on Canada for foodstuffs. Thus, trade commissions, boards of trade, chambers of commerce, and other activities regarding industrial operations are beginning to grow, and new enterprises are being established throughout the Dominion. In the years to come we are going to be less dependent on U.S. industries to supply us with goods and manufactured articles, which we will manufacture ourselves. There is too much raw material going out of this country to be manufactured elsewhere and we must find means to correct that condition. With a better understanding between capital and labor, with that spirit governing our joint activities; we cannot but feel that Canada—Canada, the promised land—in the years to come, has a profitable development before her and her people. To me the development of this Canada of ours is a never ending, interesting story, because of what I have seen, particularly in western Canada, during the past 35 years.

"I wish to speak to you about the Canadian National Rys., as I find the Canadian people are not yet fully seized with the importance of these railways to the country, and they have failed to grasp their individual responsibility to assist in the success of the Canadian National Rys. Speaking in regard to my own experience, and particularly in regard to the west, I am always very diffident about using the personal pronoun 'I,' and yet sometimes one cannot get away from it. Strange as it may appear to you, I am a very humble person, but, I am a Scotchman, and that is one of the characteristics of the race. When I hear laudatory things said about myself, I am always reminded of an incident that occurred in my early railway career, in the old land. As a young lad, selling passenger tickets at a place called Barrhead, where my mother was born, in Scotland, I was carrying on my work in the usual way when an old lady came to the ticket window to purchase a ticket to Glasgow. She looked at me very intently for a moment or so, and said, 'They tell me, laddie, you are a son of Janet Blair's.' I said, 'Yes, I am.' She went on 'I kent your monther when she was young, and she was a fine, handsome, strapping woman—you are no a bit like her.' So, I carry through life that humble spirit, because, knowing the visible truth that, 'pride goeth before a fall,' probably it is just as well not to tumble into it any more than you can help.

"The Canadian National Rys. System is composed of the Intercolonial Ry., the Prince Edward Island Ry., the National Transcontinental Ry., and the Canadian Northern Ry.; having a total of close to 14,000 miles of lines, and operating in every province of the Dominion. As to the Intercolonial—what need I say? It is there. It was originally built as a military road. It has been performing a service and I do not think the people of this country exactly understand.

Strange as it may seem to a great many people, the Intercolonial Ry. is a very valuable property, and there is a time coming, and not in the distant future, either, when both ends can be made to meet; that is to say, the earnings will pay the expenses; and we will hope a little later to see it make a little bit of profit. It has got an organization which is just as good as any organization anywhere in Canada or elsewhere, for that matter. You know all about the National Transcontinental Ry. It was a subject for political discussion for many years; but it has been built, and, strange to say, it is there, too. There is a development going on which is perfectly amazing; lumber mills are being built in every direction; settlers are going in; industries are being developed; and a through freight and passenger service has been inaugurated that in time to come will be of some advantage to the whole system.

"Do not let us forget that the Intercolonial and the National Transcontinental railways are two assets that can be made in the years to come, much more valuable than they are today, from the standpoint of dollars and cents. Had I time I could tell you what service those railways rendered during the war, and you would be amazed. Prince Edward Island was a contribution to Confederation, and let me tell you that 98% of the arable land of that little province is under cultivation, at one time or other during the year. It is an amazing little island; full of business, although handicapped by being away from the main land.

"The Canadian Northern Ry., is, after all, the mainstay of the system for the time being. In the Canadian Northern you have a property which I know all about. I am exhibit 'a' of that property. I turned the first wheel in 1896; and I have seen a little property grow from 100 miles, a single locomotive and 50 cars, to what it was in 1918, when it was turned over to the government. What has it done in all that time? There has been a great deal of loose talk about the Canadian Northern being so much junk, and being pitchforked into the government's hands to be got rid of, and that the government has had to pay for the privilege of taking it over. The Canadian Northern began, as I said before, in a small way. Railway men who are here will appreciate this joke because it requires a railway man to understand it. Timetable 1, which I prize with a great deal of satisfaction, says, 'No. 4 will not leave until No. 3 has arrived.' In those days we had pretty dry times; we were a long way from being flush with money, but I could not help working in a little humor, and of taking advantage sometimes of our richer brother, the C.P.R. In 1895-6 the safety coupler was not what it is today; we used the old link and pin, and I can remember our conductor, old Dad Ritsteen, who is still with us, and is one of the type of conductor who has gone by the board. Dad used to wander into the C.P.R. yard, where we got our freight, and occasionally he would pick up a link and pin, so that he could always keep ahead of his requirements in a fairly life sized barrel that he kept in the baggage car. In fact, it was a physical example of the widow's cruise of oil, because the more