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BEFORE TAKING.

With cheerful confidence born of inexperience in Canadian public railway management, Sir Henry Thornton tells English interviewers that the Canadian Government Railways under his presidency will be absolutely free from political control and interference. No doubt the president and manager has received such assurance, sincerely given by the Premier, confidently accepted by the public officer. Before two sessions of the Canadian Parliament shall have passed, Sir Henry Thornton may still be able to declare that the public railways are free from political control, but he will not candidly repeat the statement that they are free from political or parliamentary interference.

Mr. Hanna can tell him that he had the same assurance of administrative freedom and can go on to describe his own experience with parliamentary committees. He can tell how he was called upon to explain where, at what price, and in what manner he bought supplies, and asked many other questions on matters which he preferred to keep as business secrets from his competitors. No decisions of the premiers and ministers can take away from Parliament the right of enquiry and criticism. Nothing can be done to prevent complaint by the people, and to head off members of Parliament who are themselves under the fire of criticism from their constituents. Ministers themselves will not be able to endure calmly and without some search of a remedy the protest of their party against unpopular non-party, non-political policies, adopted by the railway management.

One can believe that Sir Henry Thornton will not submit to political dictation or even ministerial persuasion. But no one can guess how long he will stay if he defies political protest and imperils the interests of the party in office. It will be the desire of the government to give the management as free a hand as possible. Other governments have had such desires and hopes, but other governments have sometimes been disappointed.

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