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## Mr. Hanna's Dream

AT a Board of Trade banquet in Toronto a few days ago Mr. D. B. Hanna, formerly manager of the Canadian Northern, now President of the Canadian National Railway—the name chosen for the Government railway system—made a speech referring to the acquisition of the Grand Trunk, in the course of which he said:—

"When all these railways are consolidated, we will have 22,375 miles of railway, operating in every province of the Dominion, including 1,881 miles in the United States. That railway will be one of the most gigantic in the history of the world. It will employ 80,000 men, and will have gross earnings of \$170,000,000 annually. I venture to predict that in five years we will have probably \$225,000,000 gross earnings, and there is nothing to prevent the property being made a success, if you and others will see to it that neither your member of Parliament nor the Government is permitted to have a hand in the management of the road."

Mr. Hanna is a capable railway man who, we are sure, is doing his utmost to work out the Government railway problem successfully. He, no doubt, fully understands railways. But it is not so clear that he has a full comprehension of the science of democratic government. Under the Government of the German Kaiser, Mr. Hanna's scheme would probably work out all right. The Kaiser and he would just do things as they pleased and nobody would be at liberty to question their actions. But as applied to the democratic Dominion of Canada, Mr. Hanna's forecast is little more than a dream, a dream that may for a moment be pleasing to many excellent people, but a dream that cannot last. See what it is that Mr. Hanna proposes. The people of this Dominion are to have in their ownership and control 22,375 miles of railway in Canada and the United States. These railways will represent expenditures and obligations running into figures so large as to be almost beyond the comprehension of the average Canadian citizen. The payment of interest and expenses of management, to be provided by the people, will call for vast sums of money from the people's treasury. This railway business is indeed to be a big thing—by long odds the biggest thing in

Canada's public affairs. Mr. Hanna tells the people that he and his associates—or others chosen with similar powers—will handle the business all right if—mark well the if—"if you (the people) and others will see to it that **neither your member of Parliament nor the Government is permitted to have a hand in the management of the road.**"

The people! What of them? Do they not own the road? Yes. Have they not had to pay vast sums for it? Yes. And what part are they to play concerning it? None at all,—except that they are to be permitted to hand out millions of the public money to Mr. Hanna and his associates, who are to be a law unto themselves.

By a solemn league and covenant neither the people's representatives, the members of Parliament, nor even the Government, are to be permitted to say a word concerning the management of a part of the public business which in magnitude exceeds all the other parts together!

The management may, in fact, be excellent. But the public may not think so. The public is sometimes critical, inquisitive, even suspicious, even at times unjust. These are privileges that belong to the public in a democratic country. If in the presence of a pleasing theory the public seem disposed to surrender any of these privileges, be assured that such surrender will fail to stand the strain that will come whenever, with reason or without reason, a cause of discontent arises.

In large matters and small, occasions will arise when Government or Parliament or both will revolt against the autocracy that Mr. Hanna proposes. Mr. Hanna and his fellow dictators will take off a train that has been running for many years. They will say that economic reasons justify them. But the people of the district affected will not be ready to admit the justice of the change. They will agitate against it. They will call their member of Parliament to their assistance. It is possible that he may play a heroic part and tell his constituents that they are getting all the service they are entitled to. But he will be more likely to remember that they can play a heroic part by dispensing with his services at the next election; he will make himself the champion of his people against the Hanna dictatorship. The Government will hear from