After Four Years of War

The Railway Situation as Viewed by President E. W. Beatty of the C.P.R.

"FOUR years of active participation in the war and intimate association with the problems which the emergency produced must, I think, have had such a pronounced effect on the thought and spirit of the Canadian people, as will enable them to grasp and overcome the after-the-war problems with confidence and ease.

"No record of Canada's share in the war—military commercial, fiscal or economic, but adds to our pride in Canadians and Canadian institutions and stimulates confidence in our future. The problems ahead of us are indeed serious, but so was the war. Sane optimism as to our future is justified.

"From a transportation standpoint the Canadian people have, I think, every reason to be satisfied. The efforts of the companies, both on land and sea during the period of the war, have been eminently successful, especially from the public point of view. In spite of weather conditions unprecedently severe, at no time was there an approach to a physical breakdown. At no time was any disposition shown by any company to refuse assistance to any other company temporarily and locally embarrassed as to equipment or facilities. At first by the companies themselves and later under the aegis of the Canadian Railway War Board a continuous effort was maintained. The efforts of the railways were co-ordinated in such a way as to accomplish the maximum result and still not destroy or even injure the legitimate business of any one company. The results were highly satisfactory and reflect great credit, not only on the directors of the companies and the War Board, but also on the officers and men of the companies, whose loyalty, self-sacrifice and efficiency made Canada's great transportation record possible.

"While periodic attempts are made to compel an immediate decision as to the permanent solution of the so-called railway problem—though so far as efficiency and rates are concerned, there is no problem that I can see—it must be admitted that next to the war itself no question so important in its effect upon the earning power and prosperity of Canadians, as this question of further Government ownership of railways, has ever faced us. It is too important to be decided merely upon the view of extremists on either side. It can only be properly determined by careful consideration on the part of the people after having obtained some knowledge of the principles underlying efficient railroad service, the facts as to the present efficiency of the roads, and the probable—not fanciful effect which any serious change of policy must have upon that service and facts.

"Many mistakes have been made in the past, due to the ambitions of men or the ill-considered action of Governments. No good purpose, so far as I can see, is served by dwelling on these mistakes now. They were sanctioned at the time by a majority of the people of Canada. They can now serve only as a warning against other popular mistakes of even greater magnitude. An error in the shaping of our railroad policy now—a policy which would be difficult to reverse—would carry with it consequences much more disastrous to the country than those of our previous railway miscalculations, for the reason that the systems involved are so much larger. It should be remembered too that mistakes in railway policies have been made in other countries besides Canada, and that the opportunity to observe the efforts, for example, of the United States, in attempting to correct their errors, is invaluable to us, the more so since this particular example of the United States comes nearer to paralleling Canadian conditions—though the parallel is far from perfect—than any other that could possibly be chosen.

"The desire of everyone is that Canada should have to-day a railway system or systems so administered that the best service to the public will be obtained at the lowest rates consistent with fair wages, both for labor and capital. I say fair wages, because without them efficiency, loyalty and enterprise cannot be obtained, and without these things the quality of work which ensures efficient operation and low rates, cannot be secured. The question therefore is: Will Government ownership bring about this result? The question sounds simple but is in reality com- [illegible] Theoretically much may be said in favor of Government ownership. Will those theories stand the test of practice? If these theories prove a failure initially, but correct themselves, as their exponents may urge, in course of time—how long a time can Canadian people afford to pay the losses on demoralized railroad service? Do they wish to launch out on the experiment now? Or wait until their near neighbors, the United States, have worked out their experiment a little more satisfactorily? The cost of our experiment could not fail to be great, a cost certain to be collected directly or indirectly from the pockets of the Canadian people. Railway men have an admirable slogan which I feel inclined to commend to the attention of the people of Canada at this moment, namely, "Stop, look and listen."

"I have my own view on public ownership of railways, but they are not unalterable. I am undoubtedly prejudiced by an association with one company. The company has slowly developed to a point of efficiency and successful operation. Looking back over that history one is amazed at the importance of the part played by men whose enterprise, resourcefulness and tenacity of purpose could not, I think, have been stimulated and given rein in any civil service. It has taken more than thirty odd years to make the C. P. R. as efficient as it is to-day. It was not easy. Even when accomplished this degree of efficiency can be quickly lost. The consciousness that it is so easily shattered is largely responsible for the constant and intense ambition on the part of officers and men to maintain and even improve on the tradition.

"This much may, it seems to me, be said with confidence now, namely, that we do not know enough that is encouraging about Government operation of large railway systems to justify any further excursions into that field at this time. To argue from the experience of old countries where civil service obtains a much better share of the ambitious young men than in Canada, or to argue from the alleged success of comparatively local affairs, or Government organizations dominated by exceptional personalities, is unfair—not to the railways but to the country which has so much at stake in this issue. We can well afford to wait, to study dispassionately our own situation and the experiment of the United States before committing our country to serious changes in policy. The solution finally adopted in the United States will be of inestimable value to Canada. Meantime, too, the experience which Canada will now have of the present newly organized Government system will demonstrate many things. It will indicate very largely the general nature of the results we may hope to secure from an extension of the system.

"When we know more about Government operation in Canada and in the United States we may modify or entirely alter the present arrangements. We shall be justified then in reconsidering our permanent policies. But to do so without the advantage of this information—information available in due time—in fact, without the knowledge essential to the determination of the problem would be to my mind, the height of folly.

"Even though a Government co-ordination of Canadian railways rather than the present voluntary co-ordination through the Canadian Railway War Board should show an immediate saving to the people of Canada—and the experience of Government co-ordination of United States railways holds out little hope for any such saving—the sum involved would be a drop in the bucket compared to the larger ultimate losses which in the event of the failure of such policy must inevitably result, and which could not be corrected. If I may be permitted to parody the old proverb, I should say "Nationalize in haste, repent at leisure."

—From the Montreal "Gazette."

Baedeker Has Been Banned

IN the future non-German biographies of Karl Baedeker, should any be written, the biographer compiling them in the light of the great war, will doubtless call attention to two interesting facts in the career of the man who became "guide, cicerone, and friend" to millions of travellers. He will probably point out that Baedeker was a native of Essen, and obtained his idea for his professedly German guides in England, the country which has since become Germany's most hated enemy. When he issued the first of his guides, in the late thirties, and called it "The Traveller's Handbook for Belgium and Holland," he had the English "Murray" to draw upon as a model. Mr. Murray had received the idea for his travel books only a few years before from Mrs. Jameson, a writer on Shakespeare and art subjects, and who, at his suggestion, wrote "Murray's London." But it is to the credit of the German that he was no mere copyist or plagarist. Those were the days of the florid and meticulous in ephemeral literature. Murray was verbose. He rolled off quotation after quotation from the poets, the prose essayists, and the distinguished travellers. This kind of writing was exactly suited to an age when the traveller was usually a nobleman or an heir to a fortune travelling with his tutor, his "Childe Harold," or his Mrs. Mariana Starke's "Italy." Mr. Murray himself wrote some of his earliest guides, and by the time that Sir Francis Palgrave was taken on the Murray "staff," and had written a travel book on Italy, the age of the classic guidebook had set it.

But Karl Baedeker began to write for the bourgeoise as well as for the rich, and the "copyist" must take the credit, even in those early days, for opening a new path and breaking fresh ground. He thought democratically, in terms of the man with the alpenstock or the knapsack, who would preferably alternate tramping with the train and the coach, and who would want to know about the accommodations of the humbler inn which "milord" in his cabriolet would perhaps despise. Murray appealed to the rich and leisured classes. Baedeker, on the contrary, seemed to have visions of the time when the priceless treasures of the Vatican and the Louvre, the fascinating scenery of the Alps, and the grandeur that is ancient Rome would become the object of eager seeking by all the world. In time Baedeker became a complement to Murray, who published for Baedeker, while the two exchanged material for guidebook copy to mutual advantage. If people wanted, for instance, a Baedeker of the Rhine, they simply dropped in on Murray, and the latter supplied the work. After a few years, the firms went apart, Baedeker to conquer the wide, wide world, taking with him some of his English scholars, and publishing his English editions. But his guides, with their microscopic print, and their pages crammed with dry-as-dust information, imparted in indifferent English, never lost their particularly German characteristics. The maps were usually those prepared in the Leipsic house, bearing legends in German, and the articles on art and architecture, or cognate subjects, bore the profound, heavy "touch" of the German professor.

Baedeker is to be banned, however, together with the Almanach de Gotha. The fiat has gone forth that the country to which it owed indirectly its origins shall see it no more. The Red guide is to be replaced by British guides in blue. Baedeker is suspect, played out. One surmises that all along it has been playing us false, that it led us through Paris and London with German eyes or spectacles, that Baedeker artfully omitted that which it did not wish us to know, and overemphasized things that ordinarily should have fallen into the background. One fancies that it led us, on a pleasant summer's jaunt, along the Rhine or through the Fatherland the while it played a subtle game of pan-Germanism. So a new Baedeker is to arise that knows not the Leipsic house. In a kind of poetical justice it will preserve merely Baedeker's best features. We all know them. Nothing, perhaps, has ever stood the traveller in such good stead as its information upon train, or coach, or hotel, upon path, or boat, or itinerary.

Vale Baedeker! Even now a scion of the house of the Red Baedeker is on the nether side of the western front "takin' notes" for Baedeker's new France. Facing him are the men who are compiling the new France for the Blue guides. Is it not safe to say that there will be no English or French translation of the Red? Or shall we rush for Baedeker, just to see what Germany's France is like?

A Diplomat's Retort.

By September, 1914, the Germans had deliberately determined to put Turkey in the war on Germany's side. Germany had now reached the point where she no longer concealed her intentions. Once before, when I had interfered in the interest of peace, Wangenheim, the German Ambassador, had encouraged my action. Hearing that I was still attempting to restrain the Turkish authorities, he became angry. "I thought that you were a neutral?" he now exclaimed.

"I thought that you were — in Turkey," I answered.

Toward the end of October, Wangenheim was leaving nothing undone to start hostilities; all he needed now was a favorable occasion.

A Futurity.

He—Don't you think my mostache becoming?

She—It may be, but it hasn't come yet.

THE DECISIVE BATTLE.

First Victory at the Marne Saved the World.

It is essential that, at the present moment, public opinion in the Allied countries should remain sane, and not be swept by every success of a moment into premature claims of victory. Military operations are something that the ordinary man does not readily understand, with the result that he is apt to think that a successful battle at some point is necessarily a decisive victory in a war. As a matter of fact colossal defeats in the field have often been the prelude to ultimate victory, as in the case of [illegible]orf and Hochkirch, whilst a series of defeats has sometimes led to the same end, as in the case of the struggles of the Dutch with Spain. William III. lost the important battles of Steinkirk and Landen, and saw the great fortresses of Mons and Namur fall before the victorious troops of the Duc de Luxemburg, but in the end he succeeded in signing a peace so advantageous that it paved the way for the long series of victories of the most uniformly successful of all the generals the world has ever seen, the Duke of Marlborough. Nevertheless it took Marlborough twelve years of constantly victorious campaigning, including the winning of four great battles, to force Louis XIV. to sue for peace. Now the interesting feature of the Marlborough campaigns is that the peace of Utrecht was signed in 1713, but the decisive battle of the war, Blenheim, was fought in 1704, whilst all Marlborough's other great victories, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet, were fought and won subsequent to Blenheim. When the present war is over, and it is possible to regard the whole body of the campaigns in a true strategic perspective, it will be found, in all human probability, that the decisive battle of the world, was the first battle of the Marne, fought, when, in the autumn of 1914, Marshal Joffre drove the Germans from the gates of Paris.