

dinavia, and even cross to Sicily from the Italian mainland. Similarly, continental rolling stock can arrive in England if it is not too large for the smaller British loading gauge.

Consider the possibilities if such a position obtained in this country, if we adopted the standard gauge. Just before the Convention adjourned for the Christmas recess, we were debating another section of the report of the Transportation and Communications Committee, namely the tourist trade. Consider what a boost such an innovation in our railway system would mean to the growth of a great tourist trade. People from the Gulf of Mexico not having to leave their railway cars until they reached their destination in whatever part of Newfoundland they desired to reach. Apart from that big consideration, there would be the added advantages of speed in transportation, so necessary in the world today. Travel time across the island could be cut to half the time, and less, for the trains could travel at twice their highest speed (40 mph) and more, without the danger of running off the rails. Bigger trains could haul heavier loads, and so on.

This may sound a trifle ambitious to some of you, but it doesn't to me. It is certainly a matter for consideration in relation to the future, and it's to the future that we are looking. No matter how many roads we build, including a cross-country highway, we are still going to need a railroad, at least for another 50 to 100 years, unless the atomic energy commission can work out a speedy method whereby the nations can dish out tablets or capsules which we can pop in our mouths and be whisked away to the bounds of the earth. In other countries the roads did not supplant the railways, and there's no reason to suppose it will happen here.

Therefore, when I see and note that it is in the minds and plans of the Railway management to re-rail the main line, and purchase new locomotives and rolling-stock, I cannot refrain from asking the question that has always bothered me in relation to the railway, "What about the standard-gauge?" Has the Railway management given serious thought to the matter of introducing the standard gauge in this country? I have no doubt it has been thought about a lot, but has it been given serious thought? Have the whys and wherefores been thoroughly gone into the pros and cons exhaustively discussed? The time has

come when this matter must be considered if we are to make the progress we desire to make. It is not enough for someone, even someone in this Convention to get up and say the whole thing is impossible, prohibitive, and to raise a number of apparently insuperable obstacles. This is not meant to be critical of governments, past or present, or of the Railway, or even of the Committee which produced this comprehensive report. It is simply an opinion I have, which is shared by many others. I make therefore no apology for these few comments, for our deliberations concern the future; they concern the costs of government in the future; they concern the costs of public utilities like the Railway, and whenever the costs are discussed, we should make every effort to see if the country is getting, and is going to get the maximum results from them.

I can understand that neither Mr. Smallwood nor his Committee may be in a position to answer this question, nor prepared to discuss it; but I feel that the Convention should take note of it. If we are to spend some millions of dollars in the next few years to re-rail our main railway line, surely to goodness we might just as well go a little farther and adopt the standard gauge.... I am hoping that my remarks may be termed a constructive suggestion that may serve to bring this important matter more into the public gaze, where they can attempt to appraise the situation and express their views on the matter also....

Mr. Smallwood Contrary to Mr. Harrington's guess, the Committee did go into that very matter. When we met in the office of the General Manager of the Railway, that very question of narrow gauge versus standard gauge was discussed. The difficulty is bridges; there are many between St. John's and Port-aux-Basques, which were made to accommodate narrow gauge and would not now accommodate standard gauge. Not only would you have to replace the rolling stock, but the bridges. Consider what is involved in the replacing of rolling stock.... All that would have to go as well as nearly all the existing bridges along the main line.

The main advantage would be in connection with the tourist trade. I, too, would like to see the Gulf crossed regularly by train ferry service. A boat leaving North Sydney would take the trains aboard and bring them over, and set them on the rails at Port-aux-Basques. Has Mr. Harrington