

the rails were laid at the rate of from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 miles per day during the working seasons. The cost of the Inter-Colonial Railway was 8,600*l.* per mile, which he thought was about the average cost of Canadian railways. The cost of course was very much less than that in England, though it was dearer than in the United States, because the railways were better built. The Inter-Colonial Railway was as substantial a railway as any in England, with the exception that it was a single line. Everything was built in the most solid and best manner. It was not however of much use to talk about the cost of railways, because what was cheap in one country was the reverse in another. Mr. Robert Stephenson speaking in 1856 at the Institution of Civil Engineers, stated that the cost of making the Trent Valley Railway very little exceeded the parliamentary expenses incurred in obtaining the Act, but of course in the colonies such expenses were not incurred. In new countries government land was granted free of cost, and all land was cheap, the accommodation bridges were few, and the railways could be made at a comparatively less sum. It depended upon the class of railway whether it was cheap or dear. Probably one of the most expensive colonial lines that was ever built was in Ceylon, where a railway was taken for 129 miles at an elevation of 5,280 feet above the sea, at a cost of 20,000*l.* to 24,000*l.* per mile. At the present moment the Government of Ceylon owned 122 miles of railway, for which they did not owe a single penny, whilst the railway from Colombo to Kandy had paid 8, 10, and 12 per cent.

Mr. T. H. ELLIOTT said that like most of the previous speakers he had been much impressed by the paper, which was an admirable summary of the commercial statistics of Canada. He had noticed with especial interest the remarkable extent to which Government interference appeared to be carried in Canada; in almost every direction Government aid was indicated. Mr. Colmer had referred to Government experimental farms, Government commissions of inquiry as to minerals, and especially to the very extensive Government assistance in railway matters. It would be very interesting to know to what extent they might attribute the Canadian success to this active co-operation and assistance on the part of the Government. It was to be remembered that in Canada in addition to the Government measures referred to, there was a highly protective system. If Canada had been fostered by that protective system, and if Government enterprise in different directions had really been the means of developing the country, the fact might possibly constitute a useful lesson in other directions. The report of the recent commission of inquiry as to the public works of Ireland had just been presented, and possibly a little of the same enterprise and practical Government assistance might result in the same development of that country as had been achieved in Canada. He should be glad to have some information from the author as to the relative position of Canada to the United States. At the present moment in England there was a notion that a movement was proceeding in favour of active commercial union with the United States, a movement which some feared might develop into