

Large sums were also spent in increased siding accommodation and other facilities along the line, and for new and improved machinery.

The Intercolonial never has been a paying proposition, but in recent years moderate surpluses of revenue over ordinary expenditures have been shown. There are various reasons for its hitherto comparatively poor financial showing, the chief of which is that the location of a large part of the road was governed not so much by commercial as by political and imperial considerations. As most well informed people know, it was projected to constitute a binding link between the Provinces by the sea and the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario, and for military reasons it was constructed as far away as possible from the American boundary. From Moncton to Lewis it follows a roundabout and zigzag route, through sparsely settled and not very productive portions of the country. Then, again, it is handicapped along nearly its whole line by water competition.

It is submitted that the capital expenditure recorded above was necessary in the interests of the road and in order to cope with the increased traffic, which is to-day more than twice what it was in 1896. It is generally admitted that the railway has under Liberal management been brought up to a high state of efficiency. Indeed it is to-day the equal of any road on the continent for convenience, comfort and despatch. Its value as a public utility has been immensely enhanced, as the Maritime Province people particularly know.

In connection with the expenditure on the Intercolonial Railway, it will be remembered that the Conservative party during the last session of Parliament formally and specifically declared the Hon. Mr. Blair to be a great railway authority. He was the Minister directly responsible for the expenditure above noted, and in view of the verdict of the Conservatives as to his capacity, it is very natural to assume they will be prepared now to admit that in making said expenditures on the Intercolonial, he acted with due regard to all the circumstances.