

What can a railway chief do when politicians are imposing incompetent subordinates upon him, and championing them when they become defaulters? How can he make the road earn working expenses when, besides keeping a swarm of drones, he has to purchase his supplies, not in the cheapest market, but in the dearest, from partisans looking for their reward? What chance of enforcing equal rates and fair-play for all when he has to advance the interests of political adherents and ruin the merchant who votes the other way? In reply, Mr. Brydges allowed that it was only too true that "many of the appointments, especially of the principal officers, had been made absolutely for political reasons, and they had been kept in their places, notwithstanding their notorious inefficiency, because of the political influence they were able to bring to bear."

OPINIONS OF LEADERS, FORMER PREMIERS.

After their experience with the Intercolonial, and with some lines down in the Maritime Provinces, the prominent men of the day formed a pretty firm conviction against Government-owned and operated roads. Sir Alexander Galt, a man of keen intellect, who was at one time a Conservative Finance Minister, brought forward the following resolution:-

That the present system under which the Intercolonial is being constructed as a public work of the Dominion is expensive and unsatisfactory; that it is not in the public interest that the Government should be charged with the maintenance and working of railways; and that in the opinion of this house both the construction and future operation of the line should be committed to private hands.—(House of Commons, April 12th, 1870.)

Speaking at Kingston in the campaign of 1872, Sir John Macdonald said:

We propose to build this transcontinental railway by means of a company. Why? Because, as you know, we have learnt by what we have gone through on the Intercolonial that railways can be constructed and operated more cheaply, more efficiently, more advantageously in every way, by a company than by a Government. If our friends the Grits had had the Intercolonial in hand they would have experienced the same trouble that we have. They would have discovered that while it is easy when you are out of office to talk of running things as you would run a counting-house, it is very difficult when you are actually the Minister. You have then to resist the importunities of powerful friends, or yield to them, as the case may be. You have a hundred men looking for one contract or one office, each of them coming down on you like an army with banners. You have your merchants wanting to sell supplies at their own figure, the workingman threatening you if you do not increase his pay, and claims which a company road would never entertain rising up against you night and day, and calling for settlement on pain of having the claimants go over in a body to the Grit party, to get the fair and honest treatment that you deny them. Mr. Mackenzie says he is a practical man, but I wish him joy if ever he has to conduct the Intercolonial from Ottawa.

Circumstances compelled Sir John Macdonald, and Mr. Mackenzie also, to carry on the Canadian Pacific for a time as a Government work, but at the first opportunity Sir John turned it over to a company again, saying on that occasion:

The Government had every right to use all their exertions in order to relieve themselves and the country of the obligation of building this road, and of the still greater obligation of running it. We see this in the Intercolonial and in every public work. Why, Sir, it is actually impossible for the Government to run that railroad satisfactorily. The men that we put on the road, from the porter upwards, become civil servants. If one is put on from any cause whatever, he is said to be a political hack. If he is removed, it is said his removal was on account of his political opinions. If a cow is killed on the road a motion is made in respect to it by the member of the House who has the owner's vote as support. The responsibility, the expense, the worry and annoyance of