

in approaching this branch lines question. For some months I did endeavour to come to an arrangement by which the majority of these lines, or a large number of them, might be taken over and placed under government control and government operation. I say frankly, not that I thought the government or the Intercolonial railway, for the present at least, would profit by that. But as a matter of fact, there is a profit side to it as well. While the Intercolonial might not at the present time profit by it from the business standpoint, the other view ought to be taken for a moment and that is, what might the Intercolonial railway lose if some other roads secured these branch lines.

Because, sooner or later, these branch lines will be absorbed by some railway in the maritime provinces and in Quebec. And if the Intercolonial railway is to keep the trade she has, she must not allow other railways to get possession of the branch lines. But that is diverging a little from the subject. What I want to say, and say strongly, is this: While we are aiding and building railways in the west—and properly so—it is our duty to give the people whom we are bringing into this country railway accommodation. We ought not to forget that in the eastern part of Canada we have families who have been there for many generations and who have had no railway but the trunk line of the Intercolonial railway; and, unless other railways are to be allowed to come in and take possession of these branch lines and build others, it is the duty of the government to see to it that the people of eastern Canada have proper railway accommodation, whether that investment gives any return to the country or not. I desire to make it clear that my opinion is that the first duty of the government is to give the people railway accommodation. If in doing so they can make a profit, well and good; but the making of a profit by building or leasing these lines ought to be the second consideration and the accommodation of the people the first.

Mr. MORPHY. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Graham) did not make it quite clear to me, and I would like to ask him if he objects to the payment of a subsidy of \$6,400 a mile to the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario railway in the province of Ontario?

Mr. GRAHAM. When we come to a discussion of the subsidies, I shall likely be found making a remark or two, if I am in my place, as I hope to be. I do not wish to diverge from the subject we have now under discussion further than I have already done, which, I confess, is at some distance. But at least I have carefully

avoided the discussion of subsidies, that being a subject which we have not yet reached.

Mr. McCURDY. The hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) expressed surprise that the member sitting directly behind the Minister of Railways should support the government in their policy with regard to railway building in Nova Scotia. In reply to this observation I may say that I have confidence in what will be accomplished in railway development by the Borden government. I am not particularly interested in the partisan viewpoint of some hon. members opposite who have been discussing the question to-night, but I am interested very much in the development of the province of Nova Scotia, because I feel that it is par excellence a province well worth developing. I am solidly in support of the views advanced by some preceding speakers, and which I have before put forward in this House, to the effect that the Intercolonial railway, being the only trunk line operating in Nova Scotia, must necessarily provide for accommodation for outlying districts in that province, because otherwise these districts must go without railway accommodation. Short lines and small companies cannot operate to advantage. It was, I think, the lure of being removed from the unenviable position of being the only 'mainland' province in Canada not served by the Transcontinental railway that caused the electors of Nova Scotia in 1904 to return a delegation of a solid eighteen Liberal members to support the Grand Trunk Pacific policy. The province was hungry for transcontinental railway connection. These eighteen members sat out their term of office and nothing, so far as Nova Scotia was concerned, was accomplished in the way of increased railway accommodation.

Mr. McKENZIE. Will the hon. gentleman permit me a question?

Mr. McCURDY. In a minute—yes. The hon. member for South Renfrew (Mr. Graham) has urged the necessity of the present government acquiring the branch lines. It is a matter of record that during the tenure of office of the late administration, the most valuable branch line in Nova Scotia, and possibly the only one which was in profitable operation, was allowed by the late administration to go past their door and fall into the hands of a private railway company. I have said that the late government did not build any railways in Nova Scotia. Certain contracts were signed in 1911, but no railway was constructed by the late Dominion