

\$20,000 per mile, completed and equipped, would be a safe basis of calculation. In British Columbia contracts have just been awarded for over \$10,000,000, for 125 miles of road, exclusive of rails, rolling stock and extras, from Yale to Kamloops—fortunately, however, these contracts have not as yet been definitely closed. On this basis the 500 miles through this Province would probably average over \$100,000 per mile.

It would thus appear that under the present system over \$130,000,000 of capital will be absorbed in the building of 2,700 miles of our great trunk line—an average of say \$48,000 per mile.

Is Canada, with her population of 4,000,000 scattered over the breadth of the continent, equal to the strain involved in such an immense outlay? Has the very serious nature of the burden, which will result from this outlay, been duly considered?

The construction, and subsequent working of 1,500 miles of railway through a country offering no field for settlement, such as the region north of Lake Superior, and in British Columbia, have been described, affords matter for deep and anxious reflection. May not this policy turn out most difficult of execution, and, if carried out, an everlasting and ruinous drain on the resources of the country?

The information available on this question from the working of the Intercolonial Railway, under more favorable circumstances, and which nevertheless, according to the Parliamentary returns, shows a loss of nearly \$500,000 on last year's operations, is certainly not of a reassuring character.

An average cost of \$48,000 per mile would appear to be beyond both the present requirements of this railway, and