

that you will only get labour out of a man according to the wages you pay him, and that if you increase the wages of a man you will get more work than you would get out of a man you employed at a low rate of wages. I think also that if the wages of the men on the Intercolonial Railway were raised to a proper amount you might perhaps reduce the number of men that would be employed, and you would find that four men properly paid would do the work that six men are employed now to do. I think that people should be paid according to their value and that it would also be desirable that none should be employed on public works except men who are qualified to do the best work at a fair rate of wages.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Halifax). I would like to say, in regard to the observations of the Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Tarte) that while it is quite true that you may be able to get men at small wages; still, you must bear in mind that there are men in the country who, being under the necessity of supporting their families, will accept a wage which they think inadequate, and therefore, it is not perhaps quite fair to put it in the light in which the hon. Minister of Public Works is inclined to put it. I do not know that the resolution is very happily worded. It says:

That considering the general prosperity of Canada the minimum wage to be paid trackmen and other labourers on the government system of railways should be at least \$1.50 per day.

I would certainly think that whether Canada was prosperous or not the labouring man was entitled to have a fair living wage. There is no doubt that the cost of living has advanced very largely during the past five or six years. That is a circumstance which ought fairly be taken into consideration in dealing with the wages of workmen not only on the Intercolonial Railway, but in all the departments of the public service, including the Post Office Department and Public Works Department. It is true that the men who work on the Intercolonial Railway, the trackmen particularly, have a very responsible position indeed, and lead a very arduous life. That is a consideration which demands the attention of the House, or rather the attention of the Department of Railways and Canals in dealing with so important a subject. It seems a little strange that my hon. friend from Cumberland (Mr. Logan) did not have something of this kind in his mind when he was so ready in the past to vote for transactions such as the acquisition of the Drummond County Railway and the bargain that was made with the Grand Trunk Railway. We know that a very large price—very much more than the cost of that railway—was paid for it, and that a bargain which I think was not very much in the interest

of the country was made with the Grand Trunk Railway. Now, we have a deficit on the Intercolonial Railway; possibly to some extent as the result of that. The deficit on that railway it is true may not be due wholly to these circumstances, and it is without doubt due to the fact that the Intercolonial Railway is not administered on the same business principles which characterize the administration of railways owned by great corporations in this country and in the United States. If supplies for the Intercolonial Railway were purchased in the same way as they are made by other railway corporations there would be no deficit on the Intercolonial Railway, and these labourers might be paid the wage which is demanded by this resolution without a single dollar of additional burden on the taxpayers of this country. It would, therefore, be well for my hon. friend from Cumberland and for other gentleman like him who profess to be so solicitous on this subject, to take matters of that kind into consideration so that we may not have this very large deficit on the Intercolonial Railway to be put forward—as the hon. gentleman (Mr. Logan) states it is—by the Minister of Railways as a ground for refusing to these men the wage which hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House think is fairly their due. Another consideration which might well attract the attention of the House, is the absence from this debate of the Minister of Railways (Hon. Mr. Blair) as well as the absence of the Minister of Labour (Hon. Mr. Mulock). Where is the Minister of Labour to-night, who is so solicitous about fixing a fair wage in contracts made with the government of this country? Why has not my hon. friend (Mr. Logan) employed the services of the Minister of Labour to induce the Minister of Railways to do justice to these labourers?

Mr. LOGAN. I know that the leader of the opposition would not make these remarks if he knew that the Minister of Labour has been quite ill and has been confined to his house for the past week.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I regret very much the illness of the minister, which I was not aware of, but my hon. friend (Mr. Logan) had ample opportunity this session to bring up this matter when the Minister of Labour was able to be present and in the House.

Mr. LOGAN. I never had an opportunity of bringing it up when the Minister of Labour was in the House. I never had an opportunity until this time.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). That seems to indicate that the Minister of Labour has not been in the House very often during this session, because this motion has been standing on the Order Paper for the last five or six weeks. Whether or not that be the case, why has not the hon. gentleman

Mr. ROSS (Victoria, N.S.).