

this road before to-day, which we are told is completed? The Grand Trunk railway men are business men. The receipts on their road, as well as the receipts of others, have been climbing all winter, and I am sure they would have been only too glad to have operated it before now, if they could have made money out of it.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—The reason they are not operating it is because things are so bad since the hon. gentleman's friends came into power that there is no business to be done by anybody.

Hon. Mr. GORDON—We will take that for the hon. gentleman's answer, I had hoped the hon. gentleman would exhibit more intelligence in giving an answer, because every one knows the depression under which we are suffering at the present time would have existed no matter what Government were in power. Every person knows that the only business which we can expect for that road, and for which we have now to sit down and wait, is that which we may expect from the West next fall. If the crops are not any better than they were this year, and there is no increased acreage, I submit it is better for the country, in the event of the Government having to operate that road, to leave it as it is, because it is good business sense not to throw good dollars after bad. If the road can only be operated at a loss, it is better to leave it until the time to operate it successfully arrives.

Hon. Mr. WATSON.—I have no intention of taking up the time of the House on this question, but because of some remarks that fell this afternoon from hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House I could not sit still; I could not allow them to go without some contradiction. The last hon. member who spoke said that if the road were not going to pay, better let it stand idle, let the ties rot—let the rails rot rather than operate it at a loss. When that road was built, when the people of Canada undertook to finance that road, and made a bargain with the Grand Trunk Pacific, it was never contended that there were not some portions of that road which could not be operated except at a loss. The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that the Canadian Pacific railway, a successful corporation, operates hundreds, yes thousands of miles where the local freight do not pay the axle grease, but they operate these portions in connection with the whole system.

Hon. Mr. GORDON.

Why do not the Grand Trunk Pacific take over this road, and be compelled to operate it under the contract with the Government? Simply because the hon. gentleman's friends alter the change of Government, degraded the road to such an extent as to allow the Grand Trunk Pacific to refuse to comply with the conditions under which they would take over that road.

Several hon. GENTLEMEN—No.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—Consequently the Grand Trunk Pacific now are holding back looking for better terms than they made with the late Government for taking over and operating that road. I say that it is a hardship, and the gentleman who brought this matter before the House is entitled to the sympathy of the people for whom he is speaking, because those people no doubt went in there and settled in that country on the expectation that because that road was built they would have railway accommodation and railway communication. Mr. hon. friend gets up now and says, "No, let the people stay there; unless there are people sufficient to make it profitable to open that road, they prefer that it should not be operated at all." That is what I complain of. My hon. friend from Lauzon (Hon. Mr. Bolduc) criticised the action of the late commission, but the hon. member from Halifax (Hon. Mr. Power) has sufficiently answered that. A commission was appointed by the present Government, properly so I say, to investigate, and it is a good job they did. For one thing, it is complimentary to public life in Canada that after a thorough investigation no fault was found with the Grand Trunk Pacific Commission.

Hon. Mr. BOLDUC—You have never read the report, then?

Hon. Mr. WATSON—I read the report, I listened to the investigation, and I found there was no charge in connection with that commission. More than that, the Grand Trunk Pacific vouched for every dollar that was expended by the commission on the road, that was built under their own plans and under the supervision of their own engineers; the contract was in such shape that had the Liberal Government remained in power, and the commission completed the road the Grand Trunk Pacific would have been operating that road to-day, they would have had to do it under their contract. I was rather surprised to hear the hon. gentleman expressing wonder at \$13,000,000 being the amount spoken of for