

five thousand dollars a mile. If it was built sixteen years ago, I do not think it cost within ten thousand dollars a mile of that. We built about 125 miles in our district, and I can say after it was built, steel rails and all, the cost was only about sixteen thousand dollars a mile, so that this railway must run through a hilly country if it cost anything like twenty-five thousand dollars a mile. I observe that the company received \$350,000 from the Dominion towards its construction and \$400,000 from the province, and when you deduct those amounts, and give credit for the amount of money the road must have earned, which would be more than running expenses, I have no doubt that the party that is selling it is getting a good portion, if not all, of the money they have put into it. They are getting \$800,000 out of it, after getting the \$750,000 or \$850,000 to help build it. I do not know how Mr. Schreiber, as chief engineer, formed his opinion in regard to the value of the road. I have not seen his figures or estimates, and I do not know what value he puts upon the wooden bridges. I should like to know that, and also the value he places upon the iron. He says it can be repaired for about a thousand dollars a mile. It is amazing to me, if a bridge sixteen years old can be strengthened so that it will carry the engines of the day, for a thousand dollars a mile. There must be very few bridges on it. My hon. friend said something with regard to the government ownership of roads. I have no confidence whatever in the government being able to run a railway as cheaply as a private company. I think we have experience in all lines of public expenditure, that where the government is called upon to go into the construction of any public works, a railway or a building, as a rule these things cost the government, I do not care who is in power, from twenty-five to thirty per cent more than it would cost the individual. That is about the average. Then with regard to the government operating a road, what is the secret about the Intercolonial Railway? The secret about the Intercolonial Railway is that the employees have virtually taken the government by the throat. They have formed combinations. They have stipulated conditions upon which they work. They

have made their own terms for their own services.

The telegraph operators have a combination there. They made a demand upon the government, and they increased the rates beyond those paid on any road in Canada, and they have that combination to-day. A telegraph operator cannot go on the Intercolonial Railway and look for a job, and the government cannot put him there. The Minister of Railways cannot employ a man without the consent of the association. That is the condition into which things have drifted. As long as you allow the operators of the road, the station men and so on, to control the arrangement and operation of the line, to dictate their hours, dictate their wages and everything connected with the road, you will never be able to run a railway and make it pay. The government have lost control. I know it is pretty hard for a government to fight combinations of that kind. They would naturally say to themselves, 'We found things in the condition in which they are when we came in. If we lower men's wages there is a general cry and they will turn out and vote against us and our friends.' I know of a man who was in charge of the Intercolonial Railway, a man who made a determined effort to try to run it on business principles, and what was his confession, after making an honest, determined effort? If it had not been for political influence he could have done it. If it had not been that he was dictated to and that he must do something for this friend and that friend of the party in power, he could have made the line a profitable business. But he could not persist in the lines that he had laid down. He had to resign, and the result is that on the Intercolonial Railway to-day I venture to say there are more men employed to the mile than on any other road in Canada.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Yes, or in the United States either.

Hon. Mr. McMULLEN—I daresay there are. I am not blaming one party more than another with regard to the matter. The two parties, to use a vulgar phrase, may touch thumbs with regard to the responsibility in the matter, because I criticised for years the expenditure of my