

Railway has been exhausted, and it was only through the courtesy of the bank that the last pay rolls were met. Pay rolls for the past month are now unpaid, and unless the bank extends its favour still further, the employes of the road will have to wait. For that reason it is absolutely necessary, in order that the men on the road should be paid at the end of the month, that we should have this money placed at our disposal. I quite concur in the remarks made by the Finance Minister. There will be no attempt whatever to shirk any debate. We shall have the fullest and most extended investigation into the charges that may be made against the management of the road. I may say to the hon. member for Guysborough (Mr. Fraser) that I have no knowledge, personal or otherwise, of the charges he has made. I will say, however, that in the short time during which I have had connection with the road I have come to about the same conclusion as himself, that the people of the country think that the road is theirs, and that they have a right to use it. But in justice to the chief engineer, who directs the management of the road, I will say that if there has been any abuse of the pass privilege, it has not been on his part.

Mr. MULOCK. The hon. Minister of Finance desires that when this item comes up again it shall receive full business-like discussion. That will involve information regarding the working of the road, which will enable us to discover how it is money has been lost, and, if possible, provide a remedy. The information, therefore, I have asked for will be very necessary. Are passengers being carried for less than a fair rate or for nothing? And if so, to what extent? Then, if the schedules of rates are not always adhered to, we should have information as to the exceptions made. Further, we should know to what extent the pass system has been adopted, not merely in connection with elections, but generally. I have been told that it is an ordinary occurrence to see a passenger train of dead-heads pass through as railway employes. People consider it is their own railway, and that they have the right to travel on it free. If there are any books to show that, we should have the information. I would like the acting Minister of Railways to say also whether passengers are allowed to travel over that road without any pass at all, and whether a custom does not prevail of carrying people free by car loads at election times without even having passes. We also should have a statement as to whether the road is used for political purposes or a party character such as have been referred to by the hon. member for Guysborough (Mr. Fraser).

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. As the hon. Minister of Finance has made the suggestion, and as I think it extremely likely that this discussion, once entered into, may go to very considerable lengths, I would suggest to my hon. friends that they should, provided the Minister of Customs sees his way to accept the suggestion, supply him with statements of such information as will be required, and we will agree to forego at present the general discussion, on the understanding that this will be the first item brought up after the Budget debate is disposed of.

Mr. FOSTER. I have no objection to that.

Mr. BOWELL. If the hon. member for Guysborough will put in writing what he has stated, and

if the hon. member for York (Mr. Mulock) will put in writing what he wants, I will endeavour to obtain all the information I can get on these points. But I can assure these hon. gentlemen that passengers are not permitted to pass up and down the road free, unless the conductors violate their instructions and defraud the revenue.

Mr. FRASER. I am bound to say in corroboration of what the hon. Minister has stated, that at any other time there is the greatest possible strictness with regard to the general public, who must show their tickets or passes every time, or pay their money.

Mr. LANGEIER. From my own personal knowledge I know that on the day when a certain public meeting at Rimouski, during the last election, was to be held, there were two special excursion trains bringing the people to the meeting, the one from the east and the other from the west, and I saw the system which was resorted to in order to allow the Tory voters to get to that meeting without paying.

Mr. FOSTER. Are we to abide by the understanding suggested or go into a discussion now? If these charges are made, they must be met.

Mr. McMULLEN. In order that the Government should have the necessary information when the matter comes up, it is highly desirable that we should provide them with it now.

Mr. FOSTER. It is not highly desirable that all sorts of charges should be made by hon. gentlemen opposite, involving the good name of the railway, and that those charges should go to the public in the *Hansard* without any reply being made to them. The Minister of Railways made a fair proposition. Whatever information any hon. gentleman on the other side wishes to have let him send the Minister a note of it, and he will furnish the information as far as possible. I do not think it is fair that charges should go upon the record without any rebuttal appearing, as there are many people who will simply read the charges and not follow the sequence in a fortnight or three weeks later.

Mr. LAURIER. The hon. Minister of Customs said that the practice mentioned did not take place, or that if it did, it was in violation of the rules of the department. My hon. friend from Quebec wishes to give the hon. Minister the information in advance of violations of that rule to his knowledge.

Mr. McMULLEN. All we desire is to place the Government in possession of the information which they must have before them when this question comes up for discussion. We do not want them to be in a position to say that we did not intimate our intention of putting these questions. We want to know, when this road is not paying working expenses, whether we are running any cars at the entire cost of the Dominion, as we have reason to believe is the case.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). I do not understand that the observations addressed to the Committee by the hon. member for Quebec Centre (Mr. Langeier) were, in any way, a departure from the understanding which was had. If that hon. gentleman is able to inform the acting Minister of Railways of certain facts that came within his own observation, the Minister of Railways might very well explain them now, if he can, or if he cannot now, he may explain them when we come to dis-