

Railway Board, and then we would get the co-operation of all the labour organizations of the country. If you get the best men possible to manage the railway, and pay them good salaries—pay them anything in reason, because they can save their salaries in a day on this undertaking—and give them a free hand, make the undertaking as free as possible from politics, and get the co-operation not only of the labour organizations and the railway employees but of everybody in the country, the undertaking will be a success instead of showing a deficit. But an audit of the expenditures should be submitted to Parliament, so that the people's representatives can see what is being done with the people's money; because if you do not show that you are honest, if you are unwilling to lay your cards on the table, you cannot expect the people of this country to have confidence in the undertaking. They would not go out of their way to patronize the road or do anything they could to further its interests because they would have the feeling that it was not the interests of the road, their own interests, they were advancing, but the interests of some private individual. Let the Government give us freely and frankly the information they have in their possession, so as to secure the co-operation of everybody.

Some hon. members have suggested that I have been obstructing more or less. Well, at the time to which the hon. member for Red Deer refers, I brought to the attention of the Committee a question which I have since seen repeated in the press, and it is this: The Minister of Railways told us that the deficit would be about \$7,000,000, and that the earnings of the road above operating cost would be about \$3,000,000. As I pointed out then, our liabilities in connection with this road amount to something like \$470,000,000, the interest on which would be in the neighbourhood of \$18,800,000. Subtracting \$3,000,000, the surplus earnings over operating cost, leaves a deficit of about \$15,000,000. I maintain that it is unreasonable for the Government to accuse the Opposition of obstructing when they refuse to give such information as I am asking for now. The minister made that statement; when I asked him to explain, he did not refute it at all, but simply refused to answer. I might say that when I put the question, we were then under closure, and as soon as any hon. member on this side of the House asked a question the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Meighen) would say: "I move that the further consideration of

[Mr. Cahill.]

this question be postponed." A number of the clauses of this Bill have never been debated in the House, and I think the Government are giving the National Railway Company a very bad start. In the first place, the Bill is being forced through under closure; the vital clauses are not being debated, and the Government will not agree to have an annual report of the undertaking submitted to Parliament.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR (Antigonish and Guysborough): I should like to draw attention to what I think was an unintentional mistake on the part of the leader of the Government, when he said that the Bill we are now discussing contains provisions similar to those contained in the Hydro-Electric Act of the province of Ontario.

I took the trouble to look up the Hydro-Electric Act and, although I have not had time to read it carefully, I find that such is not the case but that it is the exact opposite. It appears to contain every possible safeguard for the expenditure of money. In the first place, it provides for a controller who is not an officer of the Hydro-Electric Commission but of the Government and who appears to occupy a position somewhat similar to that of the Auditor General here. It is his function to countersign every cheque that is issued by the Hydro-Electric Commission and no expenditure can be made except it is countersigned by the comptroller. The comptroller is responsible to the Government and it is his duty to see that every expenditure is authorized. Provision is made in the Act for an annual statement of expenditures, similar to the provision which is made here, but it does not stop there. The Act also provides for an estimate for the coming year, something that is not contained in this Bill. In order that I may make no mistake about this, I will read one or two sections to the House. The section providing for the controller is as follows:

The Lieutenant-Governor in Council may appoint an officer to be known as the Comptroller of the Commission who shall hold office during the pleasure of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council and shall countersign every cheque issued by the Commission, but before countersigning shall satisfy himself that the issue of the cheque is authorized.

The Commission, through the Comptroller, shall before the 15th day of February in each year, make to the Treasurer of Ontario an annual report for the information of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, and for the information of the Assembly, and such report shall contain, among other things, clear and comprehensive statements disclosing and exhibiting—