

Mr. EMMERSON. Yes, that is a railway that has shown a splendid surplus, but that is a railway that is being constructed under exceptional circumstances. But will you tell me that political influence has not been exercised? If political influence has in any way obstructed the proper management of the Intercolonial Railway, has it not been in evidence in connection with the Temiskaming Railway? The government that created the first commission that constructed that road was held responsible for every thing that commission did, and when that government went out of power and friends of hon. gentlemen opposite came into power in Ontario, what did they do? They dismissed every man—

Mr. LANCASTER. They put in good men.

Mr. EMMERSON. Does my hon. friend say they were not good men before?

Mr. LANCASTER. They did not show their goodness by their acts.

Mr. EMMERSON. My hon. friend now is just giving evidence of the very thing of which I spoke. They turned out the commissioners, then why did they turn out every engineer?

Mr. LANCASTER. No, they did not.

Mr. EMMERSON. My hon. friend says no. There may be level men and chain men and underlings in the engineering staff of that railway who were not disturbed; but every commissioner was made to resign and it was made a political commission, even if it had not been before, so that this talk, this rot I may say, about putting it into the hands of a commission in order to escape politics is simply a spurious argument and one that certainly does not answer the question relating to the Intercolonial. If you are to have a commission that is absolutely free from any influence, political, personal or otherwise, you have to make it practically autocratic. The people own the road, the people have built it, and you propose to transfer it into the hands of one man, two men, or three men, as the case may be, to whom you give autocratic powers and complete control for a period of time. That is alien to the very spirit of responsible government. If you cannot manage public works without commissions, then the Post Office Department, the Militia Department, the Public Works Department, any one of these departments should for the very same reason be placed in commission. To-day the responsibility for the management of the Intercolonial Railway is upon the government, indirectly—directly upon the department of Railways and Canals; and that is in accordance with the theory of responsible government. If a government fails in its duty—and governments have in the past, and may in the future, fail in their

Mr. EMMERSON.

duty with respect to the administration of departments—the remedy is in the hands of the people. But you construct a railway, and then you create a commission and place it in charge of that railway for a period of years, and it must necessarily be taken out of the hands of the people's representatives and be placed under the authority of one man, whose powers must be autocratic. Even private corporations do not do that. Would the shareholders or directors of a railway company place their railway under the autocratic control of a manager for a period of time? Perish the thought, they would say. They would not entertain the idea for an instant. While men may argue, and very properly so, whether the government operation of railways can be made a success or not, while they may very properly argue that no government should own a railway, that the Intercolonial should be disposed of, let them not suppose that you can remove political influence and all other difficulties by creating a commission, which must of necessity be appointed by a political party, and receive its compensation from a political party, and the members of which would necessarily wish to harmonize their actions with the desires and will of the government of the day. There is no use of our being hypocritical in respect to these matters. Let us look them squarely in the face. I am not going to say that under my management, or under the ministry of railways as now constituted, the Intercolonial Railway can be made a success. I can only say that I am determined that it shall be made a success if that is possible and within my reach; but if I fail, I want to say this, that the fact that it is not done does not prove that it cannot be done. I believe the Department of Railways can manage the affairs of the Intercolonial Railway successfully. I may be indulging in prophecy, and perhaps there are those listening to me who do not attach much importance to my forecast; but I do hope to live to see the day when I can stand on the floor of this House and say not that these things can be, but that these things have been, and I shall not die happy unless I can say that.

I think I have covered the ground of the Intercolonial Railway very fully, perhaps not exhaustively. Indeed, I have felt the embarrassment of the materials at my disposal; but I am sure that I have made some suggestions that will receive the consideration of this country; I have at least given some food for thought. I have presented to the people of Canada in detail the amount of money they have expended in connection with the great object we all have in view, in promoting the trade and transportation of Canada. That promotion would never succeed if we did not expend the money, and I can only say that whatever funds may be voted by this parliament