

be reasonable—I do not know whether it is or not—but it is quite clear after it has been operated for sixteen years, that it is not in a condition in which it can be utilized either by the mortgagees of the road or the party who owns it, and the only hope for its future is to unload it on to the Intercolonial Railway. When we consider the fact that there are wooden bridges along that line that are sixteen years old, what kind of condition must they be in? The country will have to replace all these wooden bridges with iron bridges, and that is going to be a serious expense, and if the Intercolonial Railway is going to use their heavy engines on that branch, they will have to put on heavy rails. The 56-pound rails will not carry the large engines which are run on the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Grand Trunk Railway and the Intercolonial Railway. They have the old style of rails, and a lot of wooden structures, virtually rotten, and a poor road-bed. I have not seen the country, but I am opposed to the purchase by the government of this railway for the reasons that I opposed other additions to the Intercolonial Railway. We should have confined ourselves to the main line and not have added anything. What was the experience of the Grand Trunk Railway years ago? The Grand Trunk added a number of branches to its main line. I know from the general manager of that road that they considered that those branches in place of being an advantage were a disadvantage until such time as they accumulated a certain amount of trade, and got solidified and in first-class shape, and were relaid with good steel rails. In some cases they commenced to pay, but it would have been better for the Grand Trunk Railway and Great Western if they had held to the main line of their road instead of adding largely to these systems by buying up and building branch lines. That was their experience, and the country's experience with regard to the Intercolonial Railway will be just the same. This is the commencement of a system that may be followed out. We are beginning by this purchase. I have heard it said that there are a great many more lines in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick that would like to sell out. We are beginning a system

Hon. Mr. McMULLEN.

which may result in the country owning the whole railway system of the maritime provinces. Influence will be brought to bear on the government, and it will be said, 'Well, you bought Gibson's line, why have you not a right to buy my line.' I can remember when our friends opposite were in power, Sir John Macdonald stating across the floor of the House, that they had virtually gridironed New Brunswick with roads; that they subsidized them until the country was covered with railways. We are now beginning to buy them up. I have no desire to deprive Nova Scotia and New Brunswick of their fair share of public money. I am quite willing they should look forward to successful development of any resources they have, through their country being opened up. At the same time I very much fear that a system of this kind will result in further expense and new bridges. My hon. friend from Rothesay in his speech mentioned two or three or four lines that were doing no work. Is it expected that we shall buy those lines also? Influence will be brought to bear upon the government, and they will be urged that they should take up those lines and rebuild them, and put them in proper shape. I am entirely opposed to doing that.

We have had a great many railways built in past years, like the Baie des Chaleurs and many other roads that should never have been built; that there was not a trade which would justify the construction, and they have been and are to-day, monuments of the grossest folly in some cases. I do not know whether this road is in that position or not. It may have done a large timber trade in the past. I daresay it has; but the timber trade there is getting pretty well cleaned out, and now there is little for the road to do, unless it is made a connecting link with some system that will secure freight, and in that way it may be made to earn something. I would very much prefer, in the face of our experience regarding government roads, that we should decline altogether to have anything to do with this road. I would rather see something given to help it out of its difficulty, and let the owners work it rather than we should endeavour to put it in running order. My hon. friend said it has cost about twenty-