

used for political purposes to carry men to vote from one end of the province to the other, is doing much to sap the public morality. It is bad enough when a railway company does this, for to a certain extent they are paying it out of their own pockets, but when the people's money is expended in this way at the rate of half a million dollars a year, to meet that deficit caused by carrying voters belonging to one particular party, I submit that it is high time that this matter should be enquired into. Now, I have got the papers here, and I can give the Government the names to show how these agents go behind their backs in this matter. I am not holding the Government altogether responsible. No man would ever think that the present Minister of Railways, or the late Minister of Railways, would be guilty of authorizing the granting of these passes. I only mention the fact to show that there must be looseness somewhere when the employés on the road could use their powers to pass voters from one part of Nova Scotia to another. There is a clamant need that the road should be run by men who cannot be influenced by pressure from persons who come to them and say: "This man or that man has a vote and should get a pass," or "Put my son on the railway," or "Give me a pass over the road because I am going to vote." Those who issued those passes are far worse than the men who took the passes; but so anxious were the Government to make the deficit larger that they sought the voters out and granted them passes. This occurred in Halifax, and I know that the hon. gentlemen who represent that county will repudiate it. I only mention this to show how, behind the backs of the Government, those men in some way or other hoodwink the authorities and abuse their powers. I call the attention of the hon. Minister of Railways and all hon. members from Nova Scotia and elsewhere whose fame has been tarnished by these villainous officials, to unite together and see that these things do not happen again. The deficit on the Intercolonial Railway is becoming a very serious matter indeed, and I do trust that before the next session of Parliament something in the direction indicated by the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon) will be done. After the way the railway has been run, I admit that it would be very hard for the opponents of the Government, if they came into power, to stop these practices. It is very difficult for a Government in running a railway to resist this pressure; but they should draw the line somewhere; and in winter especially, when everybody knows that the expenses are greater than in summer, they should not allow the road to be used for carrying voters free. I have heard a good deal since I have been a member of this House about the Grand Trunk Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway carrying voters. It is a bad thing to find any railway company doing that; but I maintain that it is far worse when the Government enters the lists and uses a public railway for election purposes. I care not whether it is one party or the other that does it, it is demoralizing. That is one of the reasons why it is necessary to vote this \$300,000. If the Minister means that this amount was voted last year—

Mr. BOWELL. No. What I stated was that the officials in the department had asked for a sum  
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sufficient to cover this, but that in the House the amount was reduced for some reason or other.

Mr. FRASER. No reduction could be made except by the Government. That strengthens my argument and shows conclusively that it was the operation of the road during the election that made this vote necessary. I trust, however, that the serious attention of the Government will be given to this matter, and that no passes will be granted in future.

Mr. FOSTER. There will be, either on this item or on the main Estimates, an extended discussion on the management of the Intercolonial Railway. I know that personally, because a number of gentlemen on this side of the House have spoken to me about it, and some of them have asked me just now whether they should take this discussion at the present time or defer it until the main Estimates are under consideration. I should much prefer that the discussion should go over to the main Estimates, and that the present discussion should be confined to the item before us; but if the House thinks otherwise, we can have the discussion now. I should like to ask the opinion of the hon. member for South Oxford on that point.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I am afraid that there is no alternative unless this item stands. To postpone the discussion until the main Estimates are before us may mean no discussion at all. It is quite possible, looking at the state of the House, that the vote might not be reached until a late period, and the statement made by my hon. friend, and some of the other statements, do undoubtedly require to be discussed and explained. If it is convenient for the hon. gentleman to withdraw the item, I am quite agreeable to that.

Mr. FOSTER. I do not know that that would be convenient.

Mr. MULLOCK. If the item stands, perhaps the Minister would make enquiry as to the number of passes which were issued during the election, so that we may discuss the question with a full knowledge of the facts.

Mr. FOSTER. It will not be possible for this vote to go over for any great length of time, as it is for the service of the year now up, and the amounts are pressing for payment. However, if it will facilitate matters, I will promise that very early in the consideration of the main Estimates the item of the Intercolonial Railway will be brought up, and the utmost freedom of discussion will be given upon it, and all information that can be brought will be brought. There is no wish on the part of the Government to avoid a thorough discussion of the Intercolonial Railway. In fact, I should welcome it myself as an individual member of the House; and I should like to have, so far as I am concerned, not the partisan, but the cool and well-thought-out opinions of members on both sides, in relation to the management of that railway. It is for no purpose of burking discussion that I make this suggestion; but the hon. gentlemen know how we are situated. Our desire is to have sufficient voted to provide for the working expenses of the railway. Under these circumstances, I am willing to promise that there will be full opportunity for discussion.

Mr. BOWELL. The amount that has been credited to the management of the Intercolonial