

still it is fair to say, especially when this change has been continued and the people remain well satisfied, that the management was improved by the introduction of the commission. That applies entirely to those countries and to the condition of those countries. We have a road in Canada that has been managed almost twenty years by the Government, and I do not think I say too much when I affirm that the results are not satisfactory. I differ from hon. gentlemen who claim that we should be satisfied, notwithstanding the fact that there is such a deficit, and notwithstanding the fact that we are brought face to face with an increasing deficit from year to year. That is not a satisfactory result. We have had this management under the Governments of both parties, and in both cases there was a deficit. So we may say we have given it a fair trial, and I do not believe the Government of Canada can manage the road as satisfactorily as a commission or a company. With respect to the location of the Intercolonial Railway, I desire to offer a few remarks. I come from St. John and we are deeply interested in the road. I remember there was a great deal of discussion and dissatisfaction in St. John when the road was located, but I am not at all prepared to say that the location is not a proper one, or that it is a very improper one. We have opened up a very important section of province; the road passes several very considerable towns along the north shore, and, speaking as a St. John man, I know our trade from St. John, in that section of the country has increased considerably by means of the Intercolonial Railway. We now have, largely owing to private enterprise, the road down the St. John valley. Then it was said by the Minister of Railways, and put forward very strongly as against the view of the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon), that this road was built as a national highway, and, therefore, it should continue to be a Government highway, to be operated by the Government. I must say I differ somewhat from the Minister of Justice, in regard to that matter. I know the road was built as a national road, that it was part of the condition of the union of the provinces, the road should be built and should be operated. It has been built, and it has been operated. There is no proposition not to operate it. It is intended to operate it, and the object of my hon. friend's remarks is not to decrease its utility, but to place it in a position that it could be better operated in the best interests of our country. That is the object. It is not at all to do away with the road as a national road, or interfere with the operating of it, but our desire is to operate it more in the interest of the country than is now possible. We have had a trial of the management of the road by the Government, and I do not think it has been satisfactory. For what reason? Let us look around us. It is said our rates of freight are too low. The first thing I see is that it is run as a political road. I do not care what party is in power or what Government, the Intercolonial Railway is a political road, and this fact is against its best interests. Anyone acquainted with the railway counties knows very well the pressure continually brought to bear on the representatives to have men appointed to positions on the road and retained there, and the managers are really only agents so long as the road is managed by the Government, because political pressure is continually brought to bear, no matter

Mr. McLEOD.

what party is in power. So if that fact does interfere with the best mode of managing the road, how shall we obviate that difficulty? Is it not plain that it is to remove this road as far as possible from political influences? It is said that it would not be desirable to hand it over to a private company. I agree entirely with that view. I would be entirely opposed to handing over its management to a private company. But with respect to the other proposition, I am disposed to think—in fact I believe, after giving some study to the matter and reading the results obtained by the commissioners in New South Wales—that a commission should be appointed that would be non-political, the same as are the appointments of the Auditor General and the judges, so they would be free from the control of the Government, and the entire management of the road should be placed in their hands, to be managed on business principles. I believe it should be managed on business principles. I differ in that respect from what has been said by some hon. gentlemen. I do not believe the deficit should be as large as it is, because there is a long section of the road which pays very well, the section from St. John to Halifax. There is a loss I believe, on the northern portion of the road. It is said the trains are run over the road at a high rate of speed for long distances. It may be so; I do not say it is so. A commission would find out if too many trains are run for the business to be done or a too high rate of speed maintained. If those evils are ascertained they can be remedied, and they can be remedied more easily and promptly if the road is placed in commission than if managed as at present by the Government. There is another matter referred to by my hon. colleague from St. John, the management of the road so far away from the road itself. I submit that is not a satisfactory management, and such a management cannot be made satisfactory. I am speaking as a man from a railway constituency, and I know the difficulties attending it, because I feel them every day. I believe even in this particular there is a wrong which may be remedied. Looking at these matters I think the people may fairly come to the conclusion that during the past twenty years we have had sufficient experience of the present system of management and we should have some change. I must say that I am glad that the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon) has brought this question up, and I trust that the Government will give it a fair consideration, because I know that if they do give it a fair consideration they will come to the conclusion that the present management of the Intercolonial Railway is unsatisfactory, and it will be necessary to look around to see what is the best management. If the management is not to be handed over to a private company, then we are bound to consider whether or not a commission will handle the railway in a more satisfactory way than at present.

Mr. WOOD (Westmoreland). Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to detain the House at any length, but I wish to make one or two remarks upon this subject, and to call the attention of the House to one or two circumstances which I think had perhaps be better referred to in connection with the management of the Intercolonial Railway. I think we all feel grateful to the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon) for bringing this subject to the attention of the House, and for the very great