

RAILWAY STEALS.

In speaking of the Quebec railway steal now convulsing Eastern Canada, the *Montreal Gazette* says :—

"The Baie des Chaleurs is one of those roads, somewhat plentiful of late in Canada, on the construction of which the contractors do not calculate to spend any of their own money. Government and municipal grants and the issue of bonds are looked to supply all the funds necessary, and perhaps leave something for the "boy," as Mr. Beaty facetiously called himself in one instance. The money voted by Parliament has been paid ; the company comes to Parliament with a request that it be granted new powers ; certain claimants against it allege that it has failed in its obligations and has not paid its just debts, and ask for legislation to compel it to meet its legal liabilities. The actions of members of the company itself bring its affairs before Parliament, they are accused there, and Parliament, which has paid half a million dollars for the line, has a right to find out why the work it has provided the money for has not been accomplished."

The disgraceful revelations in connection with the Quebec road should lead to a careful consideration of the whole question of government aid to railways. It is not the first time that scandalous misappropriation of public money has occurred in connection with railway schemes. Undoubtedly the country has received incalculable good from the government aid extended to certain railways, as in the case of the Canadian Pacific ; but at the same time there has been a great deal of rottenness in connection with many of these government aided roads. In the first place, aid has often been secured through political influence, wire pulling and general crookedness, and not on account of the special claims of the road, or the integrity of the promoters. Secondly, aid once secured, as in the Quebec case now before the public, and also in the case of the Manitoba Central, referred to by the *Gazette*, has been misappropriated for personal gain and not for the construction of the road. In fact, the promoting of railways has, in certain cases, simply been taken advantage of as a means of stealing public property. The securing of a railway charter simply for the purpose of selling it we claim is a misappropriation of public property. When a number of schemers get hold of a railway charter, and make it valuable by securing government aid for the proposed