

the opinion that some such information should appear in the annual report so that it might not be necessary for any hon. member to move for it.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. There is no objection to the adoption of this motion, but I take objection very strongly to the hon. gentleman giving impressions without having any data on which to found them. No hon. gentleman has a right to abuse his privilege as a member of this House, to call in question the accuracy of the statements of independent and impartial officers, who, in the discharge of their duty, holding high and responsible and important positions, place their signatures deliberately to statements laid on the Table of the House. Until some satisfactory ground is found for challenging the accuracy of the statements of officers who have enjoyed the confidence of the late, as well as the present Government, it is most improper, I think, for any hon. member to state that, in his opinion, the reports to which the officers have appended their names, are false, for it amounts to that. The hon. gentleman ought not to make such a statement without possessing some data to offer to the House. Does he suppose that a railway employing 100 locomotives and a corresponding number of cars for its operations, should not at all times have a very large number in shops for repairs? If the hon. gentleman is under this impression, he will find, by enquiry from any railway corporation or authorities, that it is utterly impossible to operate a great line of railway, with so large a number of engines and amount of rolling stock, without constantly having in the shops for repair a great number of locomotives and cars. The question is, whether the rolling stock of the Intercolonial locomotives and cars are kept in an efficient condition—as to whether they are good. You have charged to capital account a certain number of locomotives and a certain number of cars; and what the road is bound to do is to keep that number of locomotives and cars in a thoroughly efficient condition. If a locomotive is destroyed it must be replaced, and the cars must be kept good, and in a thoroughly efficient condition, in order to present a fair, honest, and just statement to the House. In connection with the operation of the Intercolonial, I have taken all pains and trouble that a Minister can take who must largely depend upon reports of the officers in his Department for correct information, and I have personally visited every shop, examined every locomotive, and personally gone over the road, and so thus verified by personal observation the accuracy of official statements. I do think, under these circumstances, hon. gentlemen ought not to venture to challenge the accuracy of the officers of the Government in the mode in which that hon. gentleman has done. The hon. gentleman says he is aware there have been very few snowstorms. Here that has been the case, but the hon. gentleman should know that in no year since 1872 have the snowstorms in the Maritime Provinces been so intense, and created so much difficulty in working the Intercolonial Railroad. Therefore, the hon. gentleman has a rather incorrect foundation for the return he asks for; but I shall have much pleasure in bringing it down, and challenge the closest scrutiny into the statement made regarding the rolling stock.

Mr. MACKENZIE. The hon. Minister says my hon. friend from Gloucester abuses his privileges as a member, in asking questions of this kind. Surely, the hon. Minister abuses his position when he makes such a charge.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The hon. gentleman should not put words into my mouth that I never uttered. I found no fault with the hon. gentleman for asking for the return. It is a perfectly proper return to move for. But, in moving for it, he ought not to say that, in his judgment, the rolling stock is not in the condition in which it is reported to be by the officers of the Department.

Mr. MACKENZIE. The hon. gentleman has a right to say he has reason to believe—

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. He ought to give grounds for his statement.

Mr. MACKENZIE. It is because the hon. gentleman has information on that subject that he makes the motion. The hon. Minister forgets that, when on this side, he spent half his time doing the same thing year after year and day after day, even to the extent of abusing public servants by name. Now, it seems no one must open his mouth to assert the contrary of what any engineer or officer may state over his signature. I saw a return this afternoon signed by a departmental officer, which I have no doubt is wrong, and I will in due time challenge the correctness of his statement. If we were to adopt the hon. Minister's view of our public duty, we might as well go home, having no right to make any enquiries unless with positive evidence to back them up. I refuse to be bound by such a rule. I shall always endeavor to protect public officers but not to the length of requiring every hon. member to believe every statement made by a subordinate of the Government.

Mr. PLUMB. No doubt the House will feel gratified to find the hon. member for Lambton, in his position of deputy leader of the Opposition, assume again the same old tone with which we are all acquainted. No doubt the hon. gentleman's interposition was needed to protect his hon. friend from Gloucester. I noticed that hon. gentleman, in moving for his return, made statements calculated to damage the Intercolonial Railway with reference to its management. The hon. gentleman said that, according to his information, there were twenty locomotives disabled.

Mr. ANGLIN. I did not say that.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I understood the hon. gentleman to say that last year there twenty-one disabled.

Mr. PLUMB. The hon. gentleman, from the manner in which he spoke, intended to throw discredit on the management as regarded the rolling stock. It is well known that, under the present management, the road has been made a success, and is no longer a burden on the country, which it was fated to be so long when under the management of hon. gentlemen opposite; and that they are galled by the contrast is evident by the wry faces they are compelled to make every time this question comes up.

Mr. ANGLIN. I am sure we are all obliged to the hon. gentleman who has just spoken, for the exceeding kindness with which he came to the help of the hon. Minister of Railways, who, I thought, was quite able to take care of himself. I did not say I am aware there are now twenty-one locomotives waiting repairs. What I said was, that last year, when I moved for a return similar to this, that return showed that out of 100 locomotives, twenty-one were actually in the repair shops, and many of those actually at work ought also to have been in the shops, being entirely unfit for work. To that statement many hon. gentlemen here will bear testimony. The evidence brought out by that return last year is in itself sufficient justification for what I have said on this occasion; for then, as to-day, the rolling stock was reported in excellent condition. I do not accuse the officials of falsehood; that is a very strong expression. They may have their own ideas as to the efficient and proper condition of the rolling stock, but their ideas are not mine nor, I think, are they those of the majority of right thinking men. I am not satisfied with the very meagre report submitted this year, and believe, from the experience of last year, that there are strong grounds for questioning its accuracy. The hon. Minister seems to think that before I am prepared to make any such statement, I should bring evidence to support it. Let me just mention one or two facts in my county with