

hon. friend may have some secret or unknown process by which he discovers the motives which are passing through the minds of other men. It is possible, though not probable, but I do not think the majority of the House, or the majority of the country agree with him in attributing such motives to the Government. The process which has to be gone through in making those selections is not one which can be gone through in a day. This Session the process necessitated the sifting of considerably more than a hundred applications for subsidies. I do not remember the exact figures, but I think it is in the neighborhood of one hundred and twenty, out of which the twenty-one before us have been eliminated by this process of selection, and I can state to my hon. friend, in contradiction of what he himself said as to the motives upon which this selection was made, that this selection has been the result of the most careful examination of the claims of every one of those companies, with a view to ascertaining where the expenditure of the public money was most beneficial to the people—where it will open up districts which have no railways at present, and where it will extend railway facilities, which are insufficiently provided at present. These are the motives, I assert, and I think I know as much about them as my hon. friend does, that have governed the Ministers in making the selection which they have done of the twenty-one railways out of one hundred and twenty-three applications for subsidies. This process is not a very easy one.

HON. MR. POWER—There are forty-four subsidies.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—I did not count them myself; I took the figures from the hon. gentleman from Monck. The process by which this elimination takes place is not an easy one. The claims of rival parties have to be heard and considered, and it cannot be done in two or three hours, or two or three days. The financial position of the country has got to be known; the accounts have to be completed and laid before the House, and discussed by the Government, to know what sum of money they can with prudence apply to projects of this description. All this necessarily delays the preparation of the list of subsidies laid before the House.

HON. MR. POWER—That is what we complain of.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—Then the hon. gentleman is such a radical Reformer that he would do away with responsible government, and place the Government in a position to do whatever they please, without consulting anybody or requiring the votes of the representatives of the people at all.

HON. MR. POWER—"Be sure you are right, and then go ahead."

HON. MR. ABBOTT—The hon. gentleman's views of the duties of a statesman seem to be predicated entirely on the idea that the statesman shall be a Heaven-born statesman, knowing what is right and wrong, and he must have a despotic power to do what he thinks is right himself. That is not the position in which the Government of Canada stand. They must consider the views of the House to which they are responsible. They cannot disregard or discourage them altogether. They must know, and must be prepared to defend, to the satisfaction of the House, the selections they make, and in order to do that their selections must be good; and I maintain that in this instance the selections have been as good and judicious as they could be made.

HON. MR. POWER—The hams have been judiciously distributed.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—The story is an amusing one, and may apply in some cases, but it does not apply in this one. The proof that the selection is a good one is the absence of any serious fault-finding with the selections that have been made. After all the censure of what the Government has done in respect of subsidies, what practical and precise fault has been found with the application of this money? The hon. gentleman from Monck is the only hon. gentleman who has mentioned the railways to which he objects, and of what do they consist? They are four in number, out of forty-four, I think my hon. friend said. The first on the list is the one to which my hon. friend a moment ago referred. It is a re-vote, a vote which has been passed before by the House long ago, which has been in force for a long time, and which is nearly, as I understand,