

directors the hon. member for Picton, along with the hon. gentleman for West Toronto. Now, Sir, I have only taken the returns for the past two years, and with the exception of the last mentioned railway, I have confined myself to the Provinces of Quebec, Ontario and the Lower Provinces, and I find, according to the records, that a large number of the members of this House are not only corporators, but stockholders in roads which have been largely bonused by the people of this country. I have observed, yesterday and to-day, that hon. gentlemen readily jump up and deny that they have any interest in these matters, and some hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House are frank enough to admit that this state of things which have been going on in the past, should be put an end to. Sir, if it is wrong, as has been stated in this House, to receive a trifling sum of money under a contract, it is infinitely a greater violation of the Independence of Parliament Act, that hon. gentlemen should hold seats in this House while they receive benefits from the Government by being interested in railways bonused by this Government. Hon. gentlemen evade the independence of Parliament Act by having their businesses made into joint-stock concerns, such as the *Montreal Gazette*, and other concerns, as otherwise they would not have a right to sit here. If that Act is not sufficiently broad to take in these cases, then it should be amended. I say it is a disgrace to this country. There is not another Legislature in the world, not excepting Central and South America, where members of the Legislature can be charged with being so directly under the influence of the Government as can be charged against members sitting in this House. Corrupt as we are in the habit of calling the United States, I say that if hon. gentlemen occupied similar positions in the State Legislatures to the position they occupy here, public opinion would soon drive them from public life. Sir, I think the time is coming rapidly when the people of Canada will, in unmistakable language, say that this sort of things must be stopped, and they will say to the hon. gentlemen in this House who have been guilty of trafficking in railways, of benefiting from bonuses granted to railways, that they can no longer hold seats in this House, that they must give up the one position or the other. I say it is not safe, under these circumstances, for the people to allow such men to represent them. If a man wants to invest in railways, and wants to make a rapid fortune, let him resign his position in this House, or not come here at all. We cannot condemn this thing too strongly; and I believe that unless the people awaken to a sense of what is proper and right, there is danger in the future. I would say with the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), that we are fast drifting into a state of despotism. We all know what history has told us, that before despotism is born, corruption has to wipe out the institutions of the people, and we are fast drifting into that condition to-day, when men will be found to justify almost any act of corruption in this House. All hon. gentlemen admit this is not right, yet are they prepared to support legislation to prevent it in future? If they are, it is the duty of the Government to bring in such legislation as will forever prevent any hon. member holding a seat in this House who receives from the Government any direct or indirect advantages, further than the pay he is entitled to draw as a member of this House.

Mr. FOSTER. I call the attention of the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat to what I am sure was an unintentional omission. In his list of martyrology which he has held up to us, I am afraid he has forgotten to include among those guilty of such infamous and unworthy acts, two hon. gentlemen who sit on his own side of the House. I think, if I mistake not, \$128,000 have been voted to the Central Railway which run through a portion of Queen's

Mr. LISTER.

and King's counties, and if I mistake not, two of the hon. gentlemen who are trusted by my hon. friend who has just sat down, the member for Queen's and the member for Sunbury, have been guilty of the infamous conduct of being directors of that road.

Mr. LANDRY (Kent). I will not impose a speech on the House, but as my name has been mentioned in connection with railways in New Brunswick I desire to offer a few words of explanation. If the hon. gentleman who a few moments ago made such a violent speech is as far astray in regard to the other names he has used in his conclusions—not in the fact of my being a stockholder—as he has with respect to myself, his speech will not be worth much where those gentlemen are known. So far as I am concerned, whatever effect it may have in Ontario, whatever prejudice it may arouse against me where I am not known, where the enterprise is not known, and the circumstances are not known, I cannot avoid. It may be that with the hon. gentleman's loud voice and violent denunciation of members where I am not known, prejudice may serve him in running an election. But in the county I represent, and where this enterprise is known, I do not fear his criticism, and he may send down his speech by bushels if he desires. The St. Louis Branch is a branch of railway that runs entirely through the county I represent. The company was incorporated, not by charter granted by this House but by a charter of the Legislature of New Brunswick. In that county as in other parts of New Brunswick it is not an easy matter to build a railway, and find a sufficient number of stockholders to interest themselves in the undertaking by taking stock and making themselves liable for payments on it without expecting to ever receive a cent on the road. And therefore when this stock list was opened my friends and those who were anxious to see the road built came and asked me to take stock for the purpose of encouraging the undertaking. I did so without expecting to obtain the return of a single cent. I never became a director and never handled a cent directly or indirectly; no money has passed through my hands down to the present time, and I never expect to get a cent. I became a stockholder either just before I became a member of Parliament or immediately I had been elected, and the people thought that, as representative of the county I could more efficiently serve them and give the enterprise more support by having my name on the stock list—not support in this House, but at home—as the representative of the county than otherwise, and I could not very well refuse in view of the law which did not prevent members of Parliament becoming stockholders. But since the discussion took place before the Railway Committee, and objections have been taken, I have thought it better to withdraw entirely from the road; and I have done so. I have written to the board of directors, asking them to have my name struck off the stock list and my stock cancelled so far as I am concerned. I have written the president, among other things, as follows:—

"I do this in view of the discussion had here on the general subject and to silence adverse criticism. As you know I never benefited in a pecuniary way by being a stockholder, nor did I ever expect to; yet I desire to wipe out even the suspicion of my being pecuniarily interested while a member of Parliament. The branch will still have my best wishes and my best efforts for its success."

I repeat that I never made one cent out of the railway, I never handled any money, I never knew anything particular about it beyond the fact that the directors had entered into a contract for building the road by which they gave all the bonuses, both local and federal, to the contractors, and that I do not expect to ever receive one cent. That is about the way I have been influenced by my connection with this railway. If other hon. members are similarly situated all I can say is that the charges made will not affect them very much where they are known;