

from 60 to 75 cents per day, and our own labouring men had to walk the streets or accept the miserable wages in competition with foreigners. But to-day these workmen have to be paid the current wages of the locality, and consequently the workmen of Canada are given the preference, and these workmen appreciate what has been done for them by this government. Instead of hon. gentlemen carping and complaining, it seems to me that they ought to support the Minister of Railways in doing more for labouring men than was done for them in the past, by increasing their wages and enabling them to have more home comforts than they formerly enjoyed. I regret that the minister is not here, but I know that his ill health prevents him from attending our evening sessions, but I trust that the negotiations between the trackmen and the Minister of Railways and the First Minister and other members of the government will result in an increase of their wages. The hon. Minister of Public Works deserves great credit for the manner in which he treats the labouring men who are working under him. I have no fault to find with him, and I believe that when the trackmen's case is placed before the Minister of Railways by the Trackmen's Association, and he is fully seized of the labours and responsibilities of these men, both of which are increased in these days by the faster and heavier trains employed, he will, with that sense of fairness he has shown the other employees on the Intercolonial, increase their wages by fixing a minimum of at least \$1.50 per day.

If I can have the consent of the seconder of my motion, I would be disposed to accept the assurances of the First Minister that the case of these men, whose claims I am urging, will receive very consideration.

MR. E. B. OSLER (West Toronto). If the mover of this resolution will get no more satisfaction out of it for the class of men whose claims he is advocating than the letter carriers obtained out of the promise of the First Minister in their case, I am afraid that he will find that he has taken up the time of this House in vain. A year ago, when I had the pleasure of attending a deputation of the letter carriers who waited on the government, we were told by the ministers then present that their grievances would be considered and justice done to them, but from that day to this nothing has been accomplished, and I am very much afraid that the same result will follow this resolution which the First Minister has asked to be withdrawn.

MR. MONK. I regret very much that it is impossible for me to withdraw the amendment. I think that this is the right time to take the sense of the House upon this important question. I quite agree with the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Lo-

gan) that the pay of \$1.50 a day is quite inadequate, and even if he were disposed to withdraw his resolution, I certainly do not feel warranted in withdrawing the amendment. Whatever doubt there may exist, as the hon. member for Prince Edward Island has said, as to whether some men may be really worth more than \$1 a day or not, there can be no doubt that the men employed on the Lachine canal are worth more than that sum, and as regards the employees of the post office in the cities of Montreal and Toronto, and in every city where there is a street delivery, the wages paid the letter carriers are a subject of scandal throughout the country. If I were to consent to the withdrawal of the amendment, which brings those two classes under the consideration of the House, I would be doing something which it would be very difficult to explain. We are not enacting a law, we are merely expressing an opinion, and if the government are going to consider the question of wages on the Intercolonial Railway, and if the Postmaster General has a Bill dealing with the question of the letter carriers, stampers, and sorters in Montreal and Toronto, it is well that the House should be now given the opportunity of expressing its views as to the course of conduct which we think ought to guide the government in the consideration of these questions.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (Hon. W. S. Fielding). I entirely dissent from the view expressed by the hon. member for Jacques Cartier (Mr. Monk) that this is the proper moment in which to deal with the question. The resolution and the amendment before the House present two classes of workmen as deserving of special consideration—those employed on the government railways and those employed in the post office. The First Minister has called attention to the fact that the claims of both these classes are engaging the attention of the government, and that one of them is to be dealt with by a Bill which will be laid before the House by the Postmaster General. Therefore the House will still have ample opportunity of dealing with the claims of the letter carriers in a most effective way when the Bill is submitted to us. There is therefore no need for the House to pass an opinion with regard to the wages of the post office officials. As to the other class, the First Minister has said that an arrangement has been made for a conference to be held at the close of the session between the representatives of these men and the Minister of Railways. My sympathies go out entirely to the workmen, after the statements that have been made to-night. I do not say that it would be wise to lay down a universal rule. The resolution does not confine itself to the trackmen, but goes further and says that all other labourers shall receive not less than \$1.50 a day.