

then I shall be able to ask them—being placed in no worse, but in rather a better position—to allow of the arrangement. Mr. Smith will see the difficulty I feel in dealing with this scheme except in its entirety. If Mr. Smith's amendment is carried I should propose to alter the remainder of the resolution, to raise equipment mortgage bonds No. 2 as part of the first one million. But the question rests with you. If you, acting in the general interests of the concern, will permit us to obtain this legislation, well and good; but if you think that on the whole it is better not, we shall bow to your decision, and we shall think, very likely, that you have come to a better conclusion than ourselves. A word or two now with reference to an apparent impression, that not only has the policy of the Directors been unsuccessful, but that to some extent we have been incompetent. Now, on that point we must call to your minds all the circumstances of the past five years, which are such as no men who have managed railways ever went through before, and I hope will never go through again. I hope on the whole you will consider we have been successful. Whether successful or unsuccessful I can assure you that for your Directors it has been very hard and anxious work. (Hear, hear.) But I think we can point to a considerable improvement of your affairs. Even those who are most fond of saying hard things with regard to the concern, and with regard to us, admit that under our management the integrity of the property has been protected, and that the *corpus* of the undertaking is in a better state than when we took the management. (Hear, hear.) I know that it is so, and if we have been able to do that, notwithstanding the enormous difficulties we have had to contend with, I think we are hardly deserving some of the hard things which are occasionally said. (Hear, hear.) But I quite sympathise with the remark—I have made it myself in private and in public—that when the Directors and the bond and shareholders in a concern like this don't quite take the same views, the bond and shareholders should try the infusion of a little new blood into the undertaking. You will have the opportunity at the meeting next April, or sooner if you like, to make any alteration in the board. Every one knows that so far as I am concerned my seat is at your disposal whenever you please. (Cries of "No, no.") So long as I am in the concern I will give you that advice which my judgment tells me is judicious. I will work as hard as I can, and leave no stone unturned to restore and improve this property.