

face of the arguments that have been put forward from this side of the House to show why this Bill should not pass. I say that is machine politics with a vengeance.

Mr. PUGSLEY: They will speak when no one can answer.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The Minister of Finance has succeeded in gagging every man who sits behind him, with the exception of the hon. member for Souris (Mr. Schaffner), who is the only man we have heard on that side of the House since three o'clock this afternoon. I have had the honour of a seat in this House for the last twelve years or more, and I have never until tonight, seen a case in which the Opposition was able absolutely to silence and cow the Government on a question that came up for discussion. If there was any justification at all for the proposal of the Government, do you not think, Sir, that some arguments would have been presented from the Government side? But we have had the the spectacle of hon. gentlemen sitting dumb while argument after argument has been put forward from this side of the House to show why this measure should not pass. Is it any wonder that we are suspicious and think that some sinister influences are at work on the other side of the House to keep them silent? Is it not proof of the statement that has been made by hon. members on this side of the House, that the money-masters of Toronto are influencing the Government in this matter?

We are proposing practically to double the public debt. Hon. gentlemen opposite have said that we are getting something by the transaction, that we are getting an asset. The test of an asset, to my mind, is what it will produce. Does any hon. gentleman in this House expect that this is a good investment, or that it will produce even running expenses and interest? This railway system is not now producing running expenses and interest in the hands of private owners, who are doing everything that can be done to make money out of the system. Our experience of government ownership is that a government cannot do as well as a private company. It is not to be expected, therefore, that this Government will be able to do anything more than pay the running expenses out of the earnings of this road, and they will do well if they succeed in doing that. If we are adding over \$400,000,000 to the public debt—I do not put it at \$600,000,000, although I believe it will reach that figure in the end—

[Mr. Sinclair.]

the people will have to pay interest on that debt. I have the honour to represent a county that has not been fairly treated by this Government, or by former Governments, in railway matters. I am sorry to say that I represent a non-railway county. I represent men who have all their lives been paying the interest on railway subsidies for the benefit of other parts of Canada, and it is a serious matter for the people I represent to know that their burdens in that respect are to be doubled without any expectation of the enormous expense that is being incurred being of any advantage to them, or of very little advantage. This doubling of the public debt is a serious matter, because we are now paying such an enormous interest on the money we have borrowed. When this Administration came into power the Government could borrow money easily at four or four-and-a-half per cent. They are now paying the enormous rate of about six per cent; that was the rate paid for the last loan which was floated.

I want to direct the attention of the Minister of Finance to the fact that the savings of the people of this country, which are very large, are bringing only three per cent. How is it that the Minister of Finance has not managed to secure some of this enormous sum of money that is packed away as the savings of the Canadian people, for which they are getting only the trifling rate of three per cent, when at the same time the minister is floating bonds among the millionaires of New York, and among our own millionaires at home, at the rate of six per cent? I have a friend in Nova Scotia, a merchant who has now retired from business and is doing some thinking on matters of this kind. In a letter to me recently he asked me to ascertain how much the savings of the people amounted to, which were netting them only three per cent interest. I asked the question in the House a few days ago, and the Minister of Finance answered as follows:

Mr. Sinclair:

1. What was the total amount on deposit in savings banks of all kinds in Canada on June 30, 1917?

2. How much was on deposit in Government savings banks at said date?

Sir Thomas White:

1. Approximately \$998,856,922.61.

2. Dominion Government savings banks, \$13,167,436.64. Post office savings banks, \$41,105,644.92.

So that in the Government savings banks of both kinds there was the sum of \$54,273,081.56. While the savings of the people