

SPEECH
OF
HON. MR. HOLMES
ON
RAILWAY CONSOLIDATION.

Hon. PROV. SECRETARY moved the second reading of the bill for the Consolidation of the Nova Scotia Railways, and in doing so spoke as follows :

In accordance with the announcement made yesterday I beg to move the second reading of the bill for the consolidation of the Nova Scotia Railways. I may say that the importance of this act has not been exceeded by that of any measure introduced into the Legislature of Nova Scotia since Confederation. It is important in a great many respects. The amount of money that it proposes to deal with is very large—larger than was ever dealt with in any measure submitted to this Legislature, for it involves the expenditure of at least ten millions of dollars. It is also important in regard to the interests which it is intended to effect, because its object is to consolidate all the railways of Nova Scotia under one management with the view of making them more efficient in regard to the services they will confer upon the public, as well as to make them more remunerative to those operating them. Everybody will admit that the system of railroads at the present time in Nova Scotia is very incomplete, and that notwithstanding the very large sums of money that have been paid from time to time from the Provincial revenues, they have never yet yielded an adequate return for the public outlay upon them. If by any means their usefulness may be increased, and larger benefits received from them it will certainly be a very great advantage to the Province, and that is the object which the Government have endeavored to accomplish in bringing down this measure. The history of railways in Nova Scotia is a very interesting one, and it will be to some extent necessary that I should refer to that history in order the more easily to make my explanations of the present measure. Of course, the history of our Provincial railroads before Confederation is a very simple one. All the railroads that were in existence when the British North America Act was passed had been built by Provincial subsidies, and as Provincial works. Before the time of the passage of the Act of Union another railway, that of the Windsor and Annapolis Railway Company, had been subsidized and was in process of construction. When the Provinces were united all the railways belonging to the Government of Nova