

a country which has about a quarter of the railway mileage of the world and whose freights are cheaper and whose management is cheaper than that of any country in the world, so that our people have an object lesson constantly before them which is more valuable than any commission could offer. We have conditions existing here which I think would very seriously embarrass the management under such circumstances. Still, I believe the scheme of a commission has great merits. I am sure that every member on this side of the House would be only too glad to support any scheme which, while doing justice to the country, would wipe the political aspect out of the management of the Intercolonial Railway, and I for one would do anything either in the direction of the appointment of a commission or of any other modification of the management of the Intercolonial Railway so as to bring about that desirable result; but at the same time I would not lose sight of the fact that this is a national road and that, if it is handed over to a commission, the true national ends for which it was constructed shall not be lost sight of in its working.

Mr. FRASER. I am very glad this matter has been brought before the House, and I agree with much that was said by the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon), which I must admit had a great deal of weight with me. I am aware that the Intercolonial Railway is a bond of union between the provinces, so that the deficit on that road might well be met by the Dominion, but I do not think that, because it is a bond of union, we should always take it for granted that there will be a deficit, and that we should act upon that idea and receive with perfect complaisance the deficits which we have to meet year after year, provided we can avoid that result. If the people of the various provinces are accommodated as they are now, I believe that we can change this deficit, and I think we should have some commission of enquiry in regard to it. Some hon. gentlemen seem to assume that this road was built under such circumstances that there must be a deficit in its working. I do not think the contracting parties believed that there was to be always a deficit on this road, and I think that probably a committee would find many things in the management of this road which might be changed. Within the last few days I have found the manner in which rates are charged on the Intercolonial Railway. For example, a car of flour from Ontario to Nova Scotia can only be paid as far as New Glasgow, and the charge from New Glasgow to Antigonish is five or six times as large as that from Ontario to New Glasgow. Of course I admit that you cannot charge as much per mile for long distances as for short distances.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Will the hon. gentleman repeat that statement?

Mr. FRASER. I say that the freight upon the same car of flour from New Glasgow to Antigonish is five times as much per mile as from Ontario to New Glasgow. I can understand that the freight must, of necessity, be less per mile for the longer distance than for the shorter distance, but let us change the situation. For example, the freight on a car from Antigonish to New Glasgow, 41 miles, is \$10, and on the same car from New Glas-

gow to Spring Hill, a distance of 100 miles, it is only \$4. There must be something wrong there. What is the reason for that?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. You never get the mileage on the long haul the same as on the short haul.

Mr. FRASER. But the charge for a car 41 miles is \$10, and for a distance more than twice that, it is only \$4.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. That is not so. You are misinformed about that.

Mr. FRASER. I am stating what I had from a business man, who actually had to pay that amount.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. There was some difficulty a little while ago in reference to some matter of that kind, but it was arranged.

Mr. FRASER. I am only mentioning this in order to show the way in which the Intercolonial Railway is managed, and I say that an investigation should be had into that management. I am satisfied that too much is made of the long rates and that the Intercolonial Railway is not making enough of the local business. I think that the Intercolonial Railway should, like most railways now, begin to see that there is more to be made in the local business than has hitherto been considered, and I believe that, if better rates were given, and the local trade were developed in that way, we would make more out of the road than by continually looking to the longer hauls. Then, as to what the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon) says should be taken into consideration, that there is something different in Canada from the condition of the countries to which he has referred. I am satisfied that there could be such a pruning brought about by such a commission as the hon. gentleman has spoken of as would materially reduce the deficit on this road. I am sure that the people of Nova Scotia would not like to see the road handed over to a company, and the reason is plain. They want to have the present rates or more favourable rates for the carriage of their freight; but, for myself, I would not fear that any more injury would result from a company than from the present system under which the road is run, and, if the present rates must be upheld, I would not very much object to handing the road over to a company. As far as the political aspect of the question is concerned, we could never suffer more from any company than we do now as the road is conducted under the Dominion Government. But that aside, as a business matter, I am satisfied, if a commission were appointed, they could make these suggestions. The hon. member for Queen's, P.E.I. (Mr. Davies) spoke about running the road from Ottawa. I must take issue with him there. I think there are men on the Intercolonial Railway, at Moncton, now, to whom if full powers were given, that would run the road better than it is now run from Ottawa. I am satisfied, for example, that the time-table which is dictated from Ottawa is against the views of the best railway men at Moncton, and could be changed for the better. The whole time-table is now made out with the view of satisfying other lines. A good table was prepared a year ago that was satisfactory to the people of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and half an hour afterwards it was changed from Ottawa. You must