

In the past the revenues of the Intercolonial railway have been received, as my hon. friend says, into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and from the Consolidated Revenue Fund there have been checked out the salaries, wages and other expenses of the railway. From inquiries which I have made, I am able to say that the audit which the Dominion Government has made with respect to the Intercolonial has been of the most imperfect and perfunctory character—and necessarily so. Officials of the Intercolonial Railway Company have received the money into Consolidated Fund and have paid it out under letters of credit.

In other words, the officials of 4 p.m. the Intercolonial Railway Company—that is, of the Dominion Government—have done precisely what the officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company do; they have received the money and paid it out under the safeguards of audit and of the other checks established by efficient administration. So that in the Intercolonial, which the Dominion Government directly owns and in respect of which the principles that my hon. friend has referred to have been in effect, we find precisely what we find in connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, namely, that the officers of the road receive the money and pay it out. How could we adopt, in connection with the mode of administration that we have selected, the method put forward by my hon. friend?

In the first place, in order to carry on corporation administration with regard to the receipt and payment out of moneys, there must be a large clerical staff, an accounting staff and an audit staff. Where are they? There are spread over this immense system practically from the Atlantic to the Pacific, accountants, clerks, agents for the receipt of money, travelling and other auditors. If all the money received from the Canadian National Railway system is to be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund and checked out by the officers of the Finance Department or under letters of credit issued to the officers of other departments and subject to the control of the Auditor General, that means a complete duplication of the services to which I have referred. Therefore, as I have said, the suggestion put forward by the hon. member is impracticable and uneconomical, impracticable because the administrative machinery of the Dominion Government to-day is not adequate, although it might be said it could be made adequate to do the work efficiently—and

there is no use in doing the work in any other way than efficiently—to check up all the receipts and expenditures of the Canadian National Railway system—uneconomical, because it duplicates for the Canadian National Railway system all the services that I have mentioned.

My hon. friend referred to the British system, and without knowledge of the facts, I wish to ask him this question, because he may know. The British Government administers through its various departments, as we do here, and the hon. member was quite correct, so far as I am aware, in stating that all moneys are received into the Consolidated Revenue Fund and paid out subject to the cheques of the Civil Service. Does my hon. friend know whether the accounts of the Suez Canal Company, the shares of which are owned by the British Government, are submitted in detail to the British House of Commons, whether the appropriation is voted in full, or whether that is dealt with as a separate corporation? I do not know.

Mr. FIELDING: I really could not answer the hon. gentleman. I have not had occasion to look into the matter.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: My hon. friend has referred to Australia, but Australia, is administering not through a corporation, but directly, as the Dominion Government administers the Intercolonial. The Australian Government own the railways, the physical property; they built them, I am told, in the first place, and consequently the Australian railway situation is on all fours with the situation which exists here respecting the administration of the several departments of the Government.

My hon. friend has spoken about turning over the administration to certain men. All administration must be turned over to certain men; indeed, we are entrusting officers of the Government here with administration of a most important character, and while the administration of the Canadian National Railway system is through a corporation every member of the staff, every clerk or every agent is, in substance and in fact, a Government employee. Further, the administration of that system can, as it will, be subjected every year in this House to the most minute scrutiny and searching investigation, because, as I stated when this Bill was in Committee, if the Dominion Government pays the deficits each year, then the Dominion Government is interested in