

there has been actual suffering. A gentleman who keeps a country store in the vicinity of Westchester told me that there was suffering in his vicinity through lack of supplies. He himself had been obliged to take flour out of his own House, that is from his domestic supply, to satisfy his customers. Freight had not been through there for a very long time. People are destroying their cattle and horses in many parts of the country because they have not food for them. And, generally, great loss is entailed by the conditions. Now, while we may not be inclined to criticise the efforts of the department during the present winter under the conditions which have prevailed, we are, I think, justly entitled to consider whether or not some remedy may be found for this in the future. I would like to ask the minister whether that is in contemplation; and, at the same time, I would like to know whether the minister has any reports from his officers which indicate that the freight, which necessarily has been at a standstill, as I understand, for three or four weeks on some portions of the road, is likely to be moved in the near future, so that better conditions may speedily prevail.

Mr. EMMERSON. I may say to my hon. friend that I have private accounts, and from the officials of the Intercolonial, statements which are certainly not exaggerated of the conditions prevailing on that road. This winter for severity has been phenomenal in the province of Nova Scotia. I have been for a good many years familiar with the weather conditions in that section of the country and certainly in my lifetime there has been nothing like it, particularly in the province of Nova Scotia. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition knows the conditions on the Intercolonial well. They were bad indeed, but were not nearly so bad as they were down in the Annapolis valley. According to the information which I have had from time to time, the people there were actually in want. I know that the schools in that locality, Acadia College and affiliated institutions were on the point of being closed. They had no coal, they had no fuel, and they really had very little supplies. There was actual want in all sections for sixteen days. They did not have a train at all. The Intercolonial went to the assistance of the Dominion Atlantic and finally they were successful in making an opening into the Annapolis valley. I understand that they had a prospect of getting to Yarmouth last night. We have information to-day from officials who are on the spot that freight is being moved all over the line. The weather is fine all over, and at all points freight is being moved, except on the short line division between Oxford Junction and Pictou. But every effort is being put forth to have that line opened up.

I want here to pay a compliment to the

men of the Intercolonial for the splendid manner in which they have given themselves to the work of removing the snow blockade. I think from what I have heard from private sources and from what I have seen in the newspapers, that it is impossible to speak too highly of them, of the personal sacrifices that they made, and the risks and exposures to which they were subjected in endeavouring to relieve the situation. The men have worked faithfully, not only in the interests of the railway, but in the interests of the travelling public, and have done all that is possible to secure their comfort, and to make conditions as easy as possible for those who were in that unfortunate position. We could not have expected such a winter, there never has been one like it in the history of the Intercolonial. In fact it is seldom during the winter season that we have any snow to speak of between Amherst and Halifax. But this winter, on the Intercolonial and others railways, has certainly been exceptional. I have not had any special report. We hope that we will not have a repetition of the occurrences of this winter. We need more motive power on the Intercolonial; that has had something to do with the difficulty. It is through no fault of the management if we have not sufficient locomotives. We have a limited number of ploughs. We were asked by all the railways to loan them ploughs and engines on those branch lines that were closed. They find themselves blocked in without coal, they cannot move their engines, they are without water, without snow ploughs, and it is impossible for them to get out. I am told that in the county of Queen's, New Brunswick, there is actual suffering and want. A telegram came to me last night from Chipman that simply told a tale that was heart rending. We are endeavouring on the Intercolonial, although it has put us to a great deal of inconvenience, to relieve somewhat the suffering of the people.

Now as to the future, I am sure that every precaution will be taken at points where the greatest drifts are to be found. When you see a snowdrift forty feet high, and contemplate that a team of horses can travel over it, across the channel cut out for the railway track and across the top of a snow plough, you can realize what a quantity of snow must have fallen and the force of the wind that drifted it. Snow fences can be of no avail under such circumstances. Why, snow fences get covered up, and after that they are of no possible value. It would only become a question of whether you should have a tier of snow fences one on top of the other as the drift got higher, raising your fence as the drift increased. But, the wind has been so fierce there would be difficulty in doing that; they are blown down.

Mr. SAM. HUGHES. That very thing was tried in the west where they have built fences with brush.