

general increase of salaries which the minister has made on the government railways. I refer to the trackmen and to the freight handlers. In reference to the Intercolonial Railway trackmen I may say that they feel under an obligation to the minister (Hon. Mr. Blair) for having increased their wages by five cents per day.

But I wish to point out that during the past three or four years—years of increased prosperity, and therefore increased prices for the necessities of life—whereas the Intercolonial Railway trackmen have had their wages raised only 5 cents per day, the necessities of life have cost from 15 to 20 per cent more than previously. I also wish to point out the increased service of the road and the increased responsibilities in connection with it. Up to the year 1896, the Intercolonial was looked upon as a byway. A man who will stand up in this House and say that the Intercolonial Railway was fitted in 1896 to be a national highway does not voice the sentiments of the maritime provinces. We had in those days slow trains, light trains and light engines, and therefore the work of the trackmen was not as responsible as it is at the present time. To-day we have some of the fastest trains that run on the continent of America; we have engines of 80 or 90 tons hauling freight trains; these things greatly increase the responsibilities of the men who have the care of the track. And yet, in this year of prosperity, when we boast of our national surplus, when we talk of the sun of prosperity shining all over Canada, we ask men to work on the government system of railways and keep their wives and children for \$1.20 a day. All I have to say is that the man who can possibly make ends meet with such a small wage, when the necessities of life are so high in price, must be a born economist. Some may think this is a small matter; but I think any matter that affects the labouring men of our country is an important matter. If we make our labouring men happy and contented, we have a greater country than we had before. I am not bringing this motion up without having repeatedly brought the subject to the attention of the Railway Department, and general manager, and the minister himself. I have been told by the minister and by the management of the Intercolonial Railway that owing to the deficit on the railway, they cannot afford to raise the wages at the present time. Mr. Speaker, I say that no deficit can be so great as to justify a government in keeping down the wages of its employees to a mean, miserable pittance. We may have had a deficit last year, but we are not going to have one this coming year. Even if we have a deficit, that applies to the railways alone. We have a great surplus of millions of dollars in the treasury of Canada, and yet in this year of surpluses we refuse to increase the wages of the workingmen. The hon. minister deserves the greatest

Mr. LOGAN.

amount of credit for having raised the wages of many of the employees of the Intercolonial Railway. I refer particularly to the trainmen, the conductors, the brakemen, the drivers, the firemen, the telegraphers, and the station agents all along the line. The wages of these men have been increased by the present Minister of Railways; and why is it that the wages of the trackmen, who have to work 10 hours a day, who have serious responsibilities, who are skilled workmen—because a man has to be a skilled workman to be able to look after any system of railways—are kept down to the pittance of \$1.20 a day? We send our immigration agents all over the world to bring men into Canada. It is a poor advertisement for Canada to have it go to the world that the government of this country pays its workingmen only \$1.20 a day. Besides, these trackmen have devoted their lives to this work. I know men in my own constituency who have worked on the railway for 20 years or more as trackmen; and if they left their job to-morrow, although they are skilled men in keeping up and maintaining a railway, they would be unfitted to earn a livelihood at any other kind of work. In reference to the freight handlers, I may say that these men are compelled by the force of circumstances and the class of work they have to do, to be men of education, men who can read and write well, and who are trustworthy and honest; and yet these men, who have serious responsibilities, who handle hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of freight, are compelled to work for \$1.20 a day. Last year there was a strike of the trackmen of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and what was the answer of the company to the men who demanded higher wages? There answer was, 'You cannot expect us, a soulless corporation, to give you more than the government of Canada pays to its men on the Intercolonial Railway.' It was that argument that killed the strike at that time, and the men were forced to go back to work. Within the last few weeks these men have been again negotiating with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and the company have agreed to increase their wages to \$1.25 a day as the minimum rate and to pay more in towns and cities where the cost of living is high. They also agreed to leave the question of the wages of the trackmen to arbitration, in case the trackmen would not accept \$1.25 per day. It seems to me that this country cannot afford to continue the present condition of affairs any longer. I am in close contact with these men. I know many of them in my own constituency. I know their circumstances, and I cannot understand how under the sun a man can keep his family, with six, seven, eight or nine children in some cases, on \$1.20 a day. My hon. friend from Montreal (Mr. Gallery) says that the city of Montreal pays \$1.50 a day for labourers on the public streets. In the town of Amherst we have to