

dollar spent in its management. Now, whatever improvidence there may be in the management of that road this loss cannot all arise from political reasons. In the Intercolonial Railway, we have from Moncton to Ste. Flavie—I speak with deference to the views of hon. gentlemen who represent the constituencies between these points—a distance of 290 miles of almost absolutely non-paying road, where express trains run forty to sixty miles without stopping at a station; and not only that, but a road where little freight is taken up or set down, and on which, with the exception of the summer travel of tourists, there is very little paying traffic whatever. Not only that, but from Ste. Flavie to Rivière du Loup, is, I venture to say, the worst road in the world as regards the difficulty of working it in winter. With the north-west and westerly winds driving the snow over it, there is not a road in the world where it is so difficult to handle the snow in the winter. We all know that that one expense has run as high as \$100,000 a year, and that is almost all on this section north of Moncton, so that I do not think, in considering this road, we should be at all surprised when we find a deficit in its operations. I may be allowed to make some passing remarks upon what has been stated as to the general principle upon which this road should be run. The hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) says it should be run on commercial principles, and I understood the hon. Minister of Justice to say that that should not be the guiding principle, but that it should rather be run on national principles. Now, I submit that the argument used by the hon. Minister of Marine is perfectly sound in principle. The canal system of this country, the money we vote for bonusing roads, the money we spend in deepening the St. Lawrence River and on our harbours and piers, the money we have spent in building the Canadian Pacific Railway—all this stands on exactly the same principle as the money we spend on the Intercolonial Railway. It was all spent, just as the money on the Intercolonial Railway was spent, for the purpose of making this country a nation instead of a few scattered colonies, and whatever it is necessary we should pay to keep that intact, I believe this Parliament will cheerfully pay, and the country will willingly back us in doing whatever is absolutely necessary to preserve the national character of the road. The limitation must be made, of course, that it shall only be what is absolutely necessary. I am not here to discuss the management of this road in its details. I must say, however, with regard to the observations of the hon. Minister of Justice, that I have not that same confidence in the administration of a Government which he seems to entertain. I believe, and I think that all the evidence leads in that direction, that the administrative test has not yet been made as regards free Governments. Where you have so many forces at work, it is very difficult to get that concentrated and prompt action which is necessary to efficient management. I am not speaking here of one party or one country, but speaking generally of the history of the whole civilized world and of free institutions. We have seen the administration of a free government break down in the Crimean war and in every war England has ever had; we have seen it break down in the United States war, and all recent history carries out my general proposition that free governments are on their trial,

so far as administration is concerned. I do not say that we cannot manage this road as a government road. I would not agree with the proposition of the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon) to put this road under a commission, until further trial has been given of the present direct executive management, or until a very strong case had been made out for placing it under a commission. I will say this, however, that neither the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) nor the Minister of Justice did full justice to the argument of my hon. friend from Albert, as I understood it. The hon. member for Bothwell said that the case of Australia is not parallel to that of Canada, because there are no competing roads there. But the hon. member for Albert's argument was this: I give you the result of running the roads in Australia with no competing roads, but before there was a commission in charge, and I compare that with the same roads as managed by a commission, and I have shown you that the result has been successful. That was the argument of the hon. member for Albert, and I do not think it was fairly met.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). If the hon. gentleman will permit me, my observation upon that statement was this: that there was an alteration in the rates, and how far the difference was the result of that alteration in rates, the statement of the hon. member for Albert did not disclose.

Mr. DICKEY. But I also think my hon. friend did not do full justice to the hon. member for Albert on the point I have mentioned. With regard to the instances which the hon. member for Albert cited, there are some very striking peculiarities about the social condition of New South Wales and Victoria. In the first place they are very small countries comparatively, and their population is comparatively within a small compass. In each of them there is a peculiar characteristic, which does not exist in Canada, of a single city containing nearly half the population of the whole country. From this city lines radiate running to the country, and it sounds strange to us as colonists to read the reports of the commissioners in Melbourne, Victoria, stating they propose next year to quadruple the track of a certain line, running out from Melbourne, and to duplicate another track. The figures as to the carriage of passengers are simply startling to anybody who reads them. The total population of Victoria is a little over a million, and yet last year on the Government roads in Victoria they carried 79,000,000 persons, and the House will understand what a tremendous feature that is in the consideration of this question when the Intercolonial Railway only carried 1,000,000 persons last year. I think the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon) will admit that it is very difficult to compare the results of any particular tariff of rates on roads where the proportion of passengers carried is about 70 to 1. They also carried about 3 tons of freight to one that we carry. Their freight charges are enormously larger than ours. I do not think that the people of this country would submit to the freight charges made on the Victoria railways. The people who settled Victoria went out there from England with a knowledge only of the English freight charges, and they have submitted to the charges which their Government have put on them, but we are situated in a very different position. We are by the side of