

The hon. member for Lunenburg (Mr. Duff) as reported at page 448 of Hansard says:

I do say that—

Speaking of the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton (Mr. Flemming).

—no hon. member should come here and try to make out that these railways have gone to the bad to the extent of \$572,000,000 in the last five years. What are the real facts?

He then proceeds to give the figures for the last six years as \$674,975,272.45 and for the first year of the six-year period as \$102,149,778. By subtracting the one from the other we get \$572,000,000, the exact figure used by the Deputy Minister of Railways and quoted by the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton. May I point out that the figures for 1925 have not been added. On two or three occasions I endeavoured to obtain from the Department of Railways and Canals a statement of that amount but up to the time I arrived here for this session I was unable to obtain it. In saying that I have no desire to find any fault with the Railway department; the fault was very largely my own. I found no disposition there not to give me the information, but up to the moment it had not arrived. What the figures are for 1925 we do not know, but it is safe to assume that they are in the neighbourhood of another hundred million dollars, which will bring the amount in the last seven years up to 775 or 800 million dollars. It has been pointed out that half of that amount was spent under the previous administration and probably a little better than half by hon. members opposite. I submit there may be much in that contention, but I want to point out to the House and to those in the country who may be privileged to read my remarks, plus the interjection, that the 340 million dollars that was spent by the preceding administration on the amalgamation was a necessary expenditure; and secondly, that it was not only necessary but was wisely expended. Now who says so? Not the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald), although I would accept his word; not an hon. member on this side of the House, but the man who made an inspection of the Canadian National Railways in 1922 directly after assuming charge of the road, Sir Henry Thornton. He took with him the best experts in the country and made a minute examination from the standpoint of operation and of construction and of keeping the railway up to the standard so that it would be prepared to go ahead and do business. I refer to the very first report he made to this government, who, by the way, employed him; and who certainly are as he is, the servant of

the Dominion of Canada, the people of this country.

I submit to this House that if one mentions the president of the Canadian National Railways above his breath he is criticized, because forsooth we are supposed not to say anything regarding this man. But if any question is raised here about him, he is privileged to go to the four corners of the country and say "The hunting season has commenced." The House of Commons has opened, and hon. members in pursuance of their duties in this House are making some inquiries into what has been done with the people's money. They are examining into the situation, and their interest in the matter is characterized as the "opening of the hunting season," when the Canadian National Railway is being hunted by members of this House. I submit that a little more hunting would not be amiss in a certain quarter but I want to read what the president of the Canadian National Railways said after making that extensive examination of the railway:

The report of the previous board of directors for the year 1921 was in the nature of a three-year survey of the operations and development of these lines as a government-owned system. The year 1922 completes the four-year period of united management of the former Canadian Government railways and the Canadian Northern railway system.

And I may say that the amalgamation was for the purpose of administration. The report continues:

The operations of the Grand Trunk Pacific, while only under complete coordination since October, 1920, or two and a quarter years, have been included for the full period for comparative purposes.

Mr. POULIOT: Will the hon. member tell me what relation exists between the Canadian National railways and the Australian treaty?

Mr. FOSTER: I will leave that to the intelligence of my hon. friend. I believe he has more intelligence than his question would indicate to the House. The report continues:

During the period the government has provided large sums of money for the physical improvement of these properties, for coordination facilities for additional rolling stock and for branch line construction.

On behalf of the board, I would like to state that after inspection of the main arteries of the system, we find that the work undertaken has been well performed, and that the expenditures on a system of such extent in a growing country, as the former board stated, are never ending, yet it may be said that the three groups of lines, until recently the Canadian National railways, enter the consolidation in excellent physical condition and operating at a high mark of efficiency as regards actual performance or movement of traffic and other factors controllable by management.

I submit there is justification out of the mouth of the servant of this corporation the