

necessary to make the return. The papers are not necessary for the discussion, for I concede all the hon. gentleman claims. I concede that the employees of the Prince Edward Island are considerably below those of the Intercolonial Railway, but I deny that because the Prince Edward Island Railway does not pay is no reason why the men should not obtain pay the same as if it did. The hon. gentleman is unsound in his premises. What is the Grand Trunk Railway doing at this moment? What is the reason that Mr. Hickey has issued a document to make a large reduction in the pay of the employees? Their responsibility is as great and their duties as onerous as before; perhaps there never was a time, in the history of the Grand Trunk Railway, when every person had to labour with such assiduity and energy in order to grapple with the unusual difficulties, through the quantity of snow this winter. And yet, notwithstanding that, we find they are told that they must submit to a reduction in pay. Why? Because there is a reduction in the returns, because the receipts have fallen off. Why, the hon. gentleman knows that all the manufacturing industries in Great Britain, all the manufacturing industries in this country, are susceptible of the same thing. When things are prosperous, when the institution is paying, they pay the employees better. When there is a glut in the manufactured articles, when they cannot get sales, they reduce the pay and they reduce the time of the employees, and they tell the employé, whose family requires just as much bread, that he cannot have more than three days' work in the week. What principle is there which applies to other railways, which applies to great institutions like the Grand Trunk Railway, which applies to other industries in the country, that does not apply to the Prince Edward Island Railway? It is the same thing precisely. What did I do with the Intercolonial Railway? When I had to meet Parliament with the statement that we had to tax the people of this country \$500,000 per annum to meet working expenses on that road, I reduced the wages of the employees from the highest to the lowest, and told them that the moment the accounts could balance, the moment the road could pay its way without taxing the people of this country, I would be only too glad to restore them. And I am only too glad to be able to say that three years ago I found we could balance the account, and that the balance, though small, was on the right side of the ledger, and it has been annually increasing, and we can maintain it. But that is not the condition of the Prince Edward Island Railway. There is no place in the civilized world where the people of the country have railway facilities afforded them to the extent they have on Prince Edward Island. Why? Because no company would continue to run a railway under the circumstances of having to pay \$100,000 per annum to do the work of the country, with a small population. They have more railway in proportion to their population and in proportion to the size of the country, and they have the work done and performed at the cost of the rest of the people of this country. I say that under the circumstances, their responsibilities being altogether inferior, the amount of the duties they perform being altogether inferior to those that are performed on the Intercolonial Railway, they have no ground to demand that I should pay them any more, while the state of the account is in that condition, than is absolutely necessary to secure the proper and efficient performance of the service. I do pay all that is required, in order to get all the employees that are necessary, and to get the service performed vigorously and efficiently; and having done that, I do not feel that, coming to Parliament as I am obliged to come, year after year to ask that out of the taxes of the people of this country that road should continue to be operated, I am in a position to go on increasing the wages beyond what I find is necessary to get the work efficiently done. It is very agreeable to the hon. gentleman, I have no doubt, to be able to pose here

as the advocate of the workingman, to be able to confront me and the Government, as the hard oppressive, grinding taskmasters of the poor people of Prince Edward Island. I have no doubt he will make a good deal of capital out of it, but he will make it on unsound premises, that I am sure cannot be sustained in this House. I pledge myself to the hon. gentleman to-night, as I pledged myself formerly to the employees of the Intercolonial Railway, that the moment we can balance the account on the Prince Edward Island Railway, as we have on the Intercolonial Railway, I will consider, with the greatest pleasure, the increase of the wages of the employees. Then there is another point. It is not so expensive to live on Prince Edward Island as it is to live in Moncton.

Mr. DAVIES. Just as expensive, and more so.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I would like to ask him what the cost of the products of the farm is in Prince Edward Island, and to compare that with the cost in Moncton. There is a very essential difference. Living is less costly, and you can obtain labour of every kind at a lower rate in Prince Edward Island than you can in Nova Scotia or in New Brunswick. Under the circumstances, I do not think the hon. gentleman has established a case for increasing the deficit between the earnings and the expenses of the Island railway by increasing the wages of the employees over and above that which I find necessary in order to secure the services of thoroughly efficient and good men in every department.

Mr. DAVIES. The hon. gentleman does me an injustice in imagining that I raise this for the purpose of making political capital. I can assure him that I never mentioned this subject at all at any public meeting in Prince Edward Island. I have mentioned it in Parliament alone, where I thought it my duty to do it, and I do not see that there is any political capital to be made out of it, unless the case justifies it.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. If the hon. gentleman will allow me, I desire to say just one word before I forget it. He says employees are not allowed to complain. No statement could be more unfounded. There is scarcely a day on which I do not receive letters from the humblest employees of the Intercolonial and Prince Edward Island Railways, asking for an increase of payment; and I am able to say, at this moment, that no employé was ever, to my knowledge placed at the slightest disadvantage by the fact of his stating in the strongest and most impressive manner the grounds on which he claimed an increased payment. All these letters are received and considered; every one of them comes before myself, and they are all dealt with and decided upon in relation to a principle of what is considered fair and just; and I am happy to be able to assure the hon. gentleman that his impression that the employees are placed at a disadvantage who complain of the inadequacy of their remuneration, is entirely without foundation.

Mr. DAVIES. I am glad to have the assurance of the hon. gentleman that that is the fact at present, because I know that not very long ago a circular was issued to that effect, whether from the Department in Ottawa or the superintendent of the road I am not aware, prohibiting the making of these complaints: but that is neither here nor there, as to the justice or injustice of the claim they prefer. He has based his argument that it is fair to discriminate between the wages of the employees on the Intercolonial and those on the Prince Edward Island Railway, on the ground, first, that the cost of living in Moncton is greater than the cost of living in Charlottetown. Where did he get his information? I can assure him it is not the fact. The cost of living in Charlottetown, I do not hesitate to say, is greater than in Moncton. The civic taxation is very much larger.