

John (Mr. Weldon). I have heard a great many complaints with respect to the annoyance caused by these return tickets. I do think that the Intercolonial could, by some means or other, look after what cases of fraud might be liable to occur, without making and maintaining a regulation which causes so much annoyance to a great many people who live alongside the railway and travel on the road. It would not be so bad if the regulation were carried out. I remember, when passing over a part of the line last year, after the regulation had been made, asking the conductor if he rigidly adhered to that rule. He said he did not. The rule either should not be made, or it should be regularly maintained. I think there is no necessity for the rule being made. It has the effect, I know, in the country through which the railway passes, of making farmers who go to St. John, and are in the habit of buying return tickets, fearful as to buying them. They do not know at what date they will be able to return. They want to take advantage of the return tickets, yet they dare not, for fear of trouble arising. This drives many of them to take passage in second-class cars when they would otherwise ride first-class. I sincerely hope this regulation, if it has been made by the Minister, may be reconsidered, and if it has been made simply by the officials, it may receive the careful consideration of the Department and, if possible, be changed.

Mr. WOOD (Westmoreland). I desire to add my testimony to that of the hon. gentleman who has just spoken. The system in question is giving rise to a great deal of dissatisfaction, and giving rise to a great many complaints in the section from which I come. For my own part, unless the present rule can be changed somewhat, with respect to return tickets, I think it would be well to abolish them altogether. I can hardly see, in the case of the Intercolonial, why the system of return tickets should be adopted. The object of return tickets with ordinary railway companies is to give the traveller an advantage and secure his return by the same road, and not by some competing road. In the case of the Intercolonial there is no competing road; the travel both ways has to go over the same road. If the rates charged for single tickets can be reduced, a reduction should be made and return tickets abolished. But if return tickets are to be issued at all, they should allow the purchaser to return at any time he chooses.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. There is no objection to the adoption of the motion, and I am sorry the Acting Minister of Railways is not present in his seat, at the moment, to speak on this subject. Of course, it is the duty of the Government to see that, while all reasonable accommodation should be given to the public, the Intercolonial should be made as profitable as possible. I presume that, in the regulations for return tickets and the limiting of the time, the Intercolonial is doing as other railways are doing. I find the practice obtains on other railways of the country which are run on commercial principles, and they have, from experience, found out how best that advantage can be secured by a limitation of time. We will bring down the returns asked for by the hon. member who made the motion and those who spoke in favor of it.

Mr. BLAKE. I cannot agree with the hon. member for Westmoreland (Mr. Wood) in his idea that there is no necessity for return tickets on the Intercolonial, as it is a local road. As I understand, the commercial principle on which return tickets are issued is, that more people can be induced to travel if you give them the inducement of cheap rates. You say to a man, you can go to St. John and back for so much. But there is not the same inducement if you say he can return at any time. In such a case all the tickets bought would be return tickets and no single rate tickets would be purchased. We must establish some general principle as applying to the railway. We must

give inducements to the people to travel over the road as much as possible, but with a reasonable limitation, as regards return tickets, which will give travellers the benefit they expect to obtain, namely a cheap rate. Hon. gentlemen are aware that we do not make a great deal of money out of the Intercolonial.

Mr. POPE. I am sorry I was not in the House when the hon. gentleman made his motion. The time for which return tickets were given has been almost doubled. But finding abuses arose from the issue of return tickets, the Department determined that the time for which tickets should be issued would depend on the length of journey—a short time for a short distance. We have nearly doubled the time for which those tickets were formerly available, but we have determined that the time shall not be exceeded.

Mr. WELDON. Up to a short time ago there was in practice no limitation as to the time for which return tickets were available. Since a change was made the annoyance has been very great. The time allowed from St. John to Sackville is four days, and that only gives a traveller two days in St. John. From Newcastle to St. John the same time is allowed. Where four or six days only are allowed, circumstances may arise by which a person is detained, and he may lose his ticket. Such a regulation renders it much more likely for return tickets to be sold. That would be avoided by the Government giving the public the benefit of a longer time.

Mr. POPE. The hon. gentleman seems to suppose that we have restricted the time, compared with what it was formerly. He is very much mistaken. We have nearly doubled the time for which the tickets were formerly available.

Mr. BLAKE. The time allowed on return tickets from St. John to Sackville, four days, is a very short time, compared with what we obtain on commercial railways in the west, where it is six days, exclusive of Sunday.

Mr. POPE. I am not saying anything as to that; I say the hon. gentleman has no reason to complain, in comparison with what previously existed. I do not remember now what the previous time was, but I do know that it is now nearly double.

Mr. BLAKE. It does not seem to be long enough.

Mr. POPE. It never would be.

Mr. BLAKE. I mean, compared with the experience of other roads, which I think very reasonable. Take, for instance, the Great Western division of the Grand Trunk. On short distances on that line you get six days, exclusive of Sundays, as the ordinary time.

Mr. POPE. What distances?

Mr. BLAKE. I have travelled 50, 60, or 100 miles.

Mr. POPE. We have nearly doubled the time, but if experience shows that the time is not long enough, we will give longer time; but we must insist on that time, whatever it is, being observed.

Mr. VAIL. I think my hon. friend the Acting Minister of Railways is mistaken as to the time. I know that a short time ago I expected to go to Montreal. I enquired of the ticket agent at Halifax the time I would have for a return ticket, and he told me the number of days, and I think it was less than half the time formerly given.

Mr. POPE. That is just where the hon. gentleman is wrong. The fact is, it is double the time formerly given. We found that abuses were creeping in under the old arrangement, and we extended the time, nearly doubling it.

Mr. SPROULE. I think the principle of giving return tickets is a very good one, but I imagine it would be in