

for traffic in opposition to the canvassers for the Grand Trunk Railway. The Prime Minister also took the ground last session, that it would be necessary to have steamers on the lakes if the railway were to be made successful. Does the government now propose to engage in the operation of steamers upon the lakes—a proposal which was laughed to scorn by the Prime Minister, by the Postmaster General, and by very many other gentlemen on that side of the House. Surely the government is not leaping haphazard into this matter without considering some of the difficulties which the Prime Minister and his colleagues were so certain about last session, when there was a proposal that the government should acquire and operate the Canada Atlantic from Montreal to Parry Sound. Has the Minister of Railways any report from his engineer as to whether or not these things are necessary? Has the hon. gentleman any report from his engineer or from any expert in the department, which would indicate whether or not the proposed operation of this line will be profitable and will tend to reduce the deficits which have prevailed in the past on the Intercolonial Railway? Has the hon. gentleman any information which would indicate to the House whether the operation of that line will reduce these deficits or will on the contrary increase the margin between receipts and expenditure? Surely it cannot be possible that the government have entered upon a policy of this kind without taking these things into consideration. Although the minister does purpose making an explanation later on, I would suppose that at the present time it would not be out of place for him to give a few words of explanation on the points which I have mentioned.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Carried.

Mr. SPROULE. It seems the minister does not deign to reply. Is it possible that he does not think it worth while to answer? This Bill has stood several times in the absence of the minister, on the understanding that when it was reached he would announce the policy of the government with regard to these railways.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. And why that policy was adopted.

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. gentleman has give us practically no information and he wishes to delay doing so until some other Bill is presented to the House.

Mr. EMMERSON. It is nine o'clock.

Mr. SPROULE. I am quite willing to sit down and allow the minister to give the information if he will do so; but I want to draw his attention to another matter. I think it was no answer to the remarks of my hon. friend from East Simcoe (Mr. Lennox) to say that the road would require to be improved. I inferred from the tenor

Mr. R. L. BORDEN.

of the remarks of the hon. minister that the government were going to share in the cost of the improvements. Is that so, or does the Grand Trunk make all the required improvements itself, and then allow the Intercolonial to use the improved road? If the government are going to share in the cost of the improvements, are they going to bring the Intercolonial under the operation of the Railway Act? I understood that the Railway Act did not apply to the Intercolonial. The hon. minister tells us that under the arrangement that is to be made, the Grand Trunk Railway will be subject to the Railway Commission, and the Railway Commission will act under the authority given to them by the Railway Act. If the Railway Act does not apply to the Intercolonial Railway, how can it as one of the contracting parties carry on negotiations? Will the hon. minister be good enough to tell us that?

Mr. BENNETT. I would like to call the attention of the minister to this fact, that the mileage by the Canada Atlantic from Depot Harbour to Montreal is practically the same as the mileage by the Grand Trunk system from Montreal to Midland; and when it is considered that you will have to act in co-operation with the Grand Trunk over a distance of 170 miles more of railway than if you utilized the Midland division, you can imagine what will be the amount of that increased cost. Let me also call the attention of the minister to this fact, that the Canadian Northern Railway Company is building a line approaching the town of Orillia, so that if the Midland division of the Grand Trunk, which I suggested should be utilized by the government in co-operation with the Grand Trunk, is utilized, the Canadian Northern would also have access to the city of Toronto from the Georgian bay by running over thirty miles of the Midland railway.

Mr. SPROULE. I want to say, before the Chairman leaves the chair, that if this is the treatment that is going to be meted out to this side of the House by the Minister of Railways, we had better understand it at once. If we ask questions which we have a perfect right to ask and which it is the duty of the minister to answer, and if he does not deign to answer them, then I think we had better know it and govern ourselves accordingly.

Mr. EMMERSON. I want to say in reply to my hon. friend that I explained simply the general policy of the government, and I said that when the Bill was introduced I would then be in a position to furnish answers to all reasonable questions that might be put to me. If it were not nine o'clock and my hon. friend's questions had had come a little earlier, perhaps he would not have attacked me as he has done for not answering. I think I pay proper courtesy to all the hon. gentlemen opposite; I