

time province interests in the policy he has adopted?

There can be no doubt of that. I am satisfied that when he makes his appeal to the people of his own constituency and his own province they will readily appreciate the efforts he is making on their behalf. But the junior member for Halifax (Mr. W. Roche) had a fling at our leader as well as the other gentlemen whose names I have mentioned. He said:—

Now suppose we adopted the proposition of the leader of the opposition, and carried the Intercolonial to the Georgian Bay, suppose we carried it to Depot Harbour, and suppose that was the beginning of the Canada Atlantic Railway. What would he do to get his grain in the winter time? Would he be able to navigate the lakes? The absurdity of the proposition seems to have suggested itself to him.

In this summary manner did my hon. friend the junior member for Halifax dispose of the leader of the opposition. The proposition of my hon. leader is to extend the Intercolonial Railway to Depot Harbour. Is that proposition so absurd after all? Mr. Blair did not think so. That gentleman, who has been presented to us as the ablest railway expert in this country available for the chairmanship of the Railway Commission, thought just the reverse. But perhaps he has not as much knowledge of the transportation question as my hon. friend the junior member for Halifax. In any event, Mr. Blair almost from the moment he became Minister of Railways—certainly from the time he extended the Intercolonial Railway to Montreal—advocated that extension, and not one word of opposition then fell from the lips of hon. gentlemen opposite. It is a matter of record and notoriety that not one of these hon. gentlemen ever spoke on the extension of the Intercolonial Railway except to re-echo the opinions and sentiments of Mr. Blair. But when the leader of the opposition proposes the extension of the Intercolonial Railway to our inland waters, so that it may secure its share of the vast and ever-increasing traffic and convey it from the eastern shores of Georgian Bay down to the Atlantic seaboard, he is told by the junior member for Halifax that his proposition is an absurd one—the absurdity of which suggests itself at once to any one to whom that proposition is stated. Well, we will leave to the people of Halifax the question whether after all the extension of the Intercolonial Railway, with which undertaking the interests of Halifax and St. John are so closely identified, is so absurd a proposition as the junior member for Halifax pretends. My hon. friend from Hants (Mr. Russell) used to be an enthusiastic supporter of the extension of the Intercolonial Railway to Georgian Bay, though one may find that difficult to believe in view of his recent utterances. I think that at that time he was one of the representatives of the

city of Halifax. Whether he thought differently when he was representing the city of Halifax from what he does now, I am not prepared to say; but what I do know is that he is on record as having strongly advocated the extension of the Intercolonial Railway from Montreal west to Depot Harbour. When, a few years ago, the announcement was made in the Toronto 'World' that it was Mr. Blair's intention to extend the Intercolonial Railway to Georgian Bay by the purchase of the Canada Atlantic, the hon. member for Hants rushed into print to give his support to that policy. It would be a pity indeed if we did not preserve the views which the hon. gentleman then expressed, especially in view of the statement which he made during the course of this debate in opposition to what he then advocated. He then said—that is when the announcement was made of the intention of the government to buy the Canada Atlantic and carry the Intercolonial Railway to Georgian Bay:—

I hope that if any possibility is presented of accomplishing such an object, the government will not lose the opportunity. The extension to Montreal was simply the logical sequence of the purchase of the section between Lévis and Rivière du Loup, and the extension to the waters of the great lakes would be a still further and equally logical sequence of the steps already taken.

How is it my hon. friend did not then consider the policy an absurd one? What change has since come over him which prompts him to denounce it now? If it was a good policy to extend the Intercolonial Railway to Georgian Bay three or four years ago, what has since occurred to make that an unsound policy to-day? It would be a pity not to have these opinions put on record, for they show what we have often exposed on this side. They show that the government of Canada to-day is an opportunist government, that what it advocated yesterday it denounces to-day, and its policy of to-day it is prepared to abandon to-morrow without giving any good or sufficient reason for its change of faith. I believe it is better to be right than to be consistent, but the onus of proof that these gentlemen are right in denouncing to-day what they advocated yesterday rests on their shoulders and not on ours. Let me quote further from the same letter of the hon. member for Hants:—

The day must come, if we are not to prove recreant to the ideals with which we enter upon our national undertaking, when the Intercolonial Railway will the whole year round carry the produce of our western fields through the gateway of a Canadian port for shipment to the millions of Europe.

I do not say that this patriotic ambition may not be realized to a very great degree even under present conditions, but it is perfectly obvious that the Intercolonial Railway must be heavily handicapped in its competition for western freight by its present incompleteness.