

hon. friend's position in this matter, because he is a loyal man, and has suffered much in this war. He knows the situation at the front, as well as any man in this House, and upon my word, I cannot understand the attitude he takes in regard to the matter of rails.

Mr. OLIVER: I am equally at a loss to understand the position my hon. friend the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Railways have taken. When this matter was up for consideration before, I raised the question as to why these rails were taken from Jasper pass, when rails could have been obtained much nearer the Atlantic coast, and I was told the reason they were taken from there was because they were of the same boring as the rails at the front. The minister made the statement that it was necessary to take the Grand Trunk Pacific rails instead of the Canadian Northern rails lying alongside of them, because there was a different boring for the bolts, which, by means of the fishplates, connected the ends of the rails. I say, on the information I have from France, and on the common sense that any ordinary man has, that the reason given is no reason at all. It is nothing more nor less than nonsense, and I think such an argument should not be advanced in the House of Commons by a responsible minister of the Crown. In the first place, these rails were taken from the Jasper pass, 2,500 miles from the Atlantic seaboard, when they had just as good a right to be taken, and could have been taken, from within 200 or 300 miles of the Atlantic seaboard. In the second place, they were taken from the Grand Trunk Pacific in the Jasper pass, when, alongside, was the Canadian Northern, with identically the same weight of rails, the same kind of rails, lying on a road not nearly as well graded as the Grand Trunk Pacific, and with steeper grades. They were taken off the Grand Trunk Pacific, instead of being taken off the Canadian Northern under the pretense—I say pretense—that, because there was half an inch difference in the location of the borings, therefore it was not convenient to use them in France. I say that, in view of such arguments being put before the House, supposedly by a serious Government, I am entitled to call in question the good faith of the Government in this matter, and to say that these rails were not taken up and sent to France because they were needed in France more than any other rail.

[Sir Thomas White.]

Sir THOMAS WHITE: Why were they taken up?

Mr. OLIVER: Because it was the policy of this Government to wreck the enterprise, and for no other reason. Has the Government ever laid on the table of the House the request of the British Government for these rails? No, they have not.

Mr. BRADBURY: Why should they be sent there, if they were not needed?

Mr. OLIVER: I am at a loss to understand why this Government does certain things. They have accounted for what they have done by talking nonsense.

Mr. BRADBURY: My hon. friend should not say it is nonsense.

Mr. OLIVER: I am saying it is nonsense, when they say that they had to take Grand Trunk rails, instead of Canadian Northern rails, because there was half an inch difference in the borings.

Mr. BRADBURY: That is an important thing:

Mr. OLIVER: I have information from the front that they link up all kinds of different rails.

Mr. GRAHAM: They do.

Mr. OLIVER: And so they can. My common sense tells me that for work at the front they do not want 80 pound steel, if they can get 60 pound, or lighter steel. Any man's common sense would tell him that, and when the Government undertakes to tell this House that they took up those rails because they had to, and because it was in the interest of the Allies fighting the battles in France, they are not doing justice to the intelligence of the House or of the country, and when I ask him what the cost is going to be—

Mr. HANNA: Does my hon. friend not know that the Railway Commission ordered those rails to be taken up at that particular place? The Railway Commission should know what is best to do in this matter.

Mr. OLIVER: I do not acknowledge allegiance to the Railway Commission. It is a creature of this Parliament—of this Government.

Mr. HANNA: They would be very much obliged to you for that statement.

Mr. OLIVER: I would be very glad to make that statement anywhere. This Parliament is not subject to the Railway Com-