

We were told by my right hon. friend last session that not only was it a wise and statesmanlike measure, but that it was absolutely necessary for the salvation of the country, that by this great measure we were to guard against the danger of the suspension of the bonding privilege by the United States. By his appointment to the chairmanship of the Railway Commission, Mr. Blair has been certified by the government to be a man in whose judgment and integrity they have full confidence. Well, let us hear the opinion of Mr. Blair, reiterated over and over again, of this statesmanlike measure of the government. He says in his speech :

My quarrel with the government so far as this portion of the undertaking is concerned, rests almost entirely upon the consideration that they are plunging headlong into this thing, in a most unwise, injudicious, and unbusinesslike way, when by a little pause, by a year or two of delay to get information, we might be put in possession of facts which would justify us in proceeding.

Then, he continues :

A more absolutely unworkable, and in the opinion of every railway man in the country, a more senseless suggestion it would be difficult to make.

Further on he says :

We are being led in a kind of hysterical frenzy, it seems to me, to adopt ideas that are wholly and absolutely impracticable.

He continues :

Is there a well-grounded fear that the Grand Trunk Railway Company will not allow us, two or three years, hence, to build and make them a present of this line, that they will not accept it ?

Further on he says :

But, Sir, I maintain that in respect to this duplication of the Intercolonial Railway by the extension from Quebec to Moncton, there is no necessity, there is no reason, there is no justification, there is no object, good bad or indifferent, to be attained. Yes ; it is absolutely useless. It is a total and absolute waste of the public money. It is not only a destruction of the Intercolonial Railway, but it is a sheer unjustifiable squandering of the public money.

This is the gentleman who has been summoned by the government to preside over the deliberations of the Railway Commission and to mete out equal justice to the railway corporations on the one hand and to the people of this country on the other. Again he says :

And now, Sir, the people who live along the Intercolonial Railway are to be deprived of these advantages without rhyme and without reason, without a particle of justification and without a particle of warrant, and while the government is doing this, they are at the same time wasting a vast amount of public money in order to do it.

Further on :

We are saying that we did not know what we were doing—that we did not care what we were

doing. It suits our purpose now to destroy entirely what we have done, and to belittle all that has been the result of our past policy. That is what is being proposed in this policy to-day. I protest against it. * * * * This proposal is absolutely unjustifiable, and the people of this country will not stand it. Not all the influence which the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway can bring to bear on the electorate will justify the outrage proposed to be perpetrated.

The experiences of my hon. friend the Minister of Customs in East Lambton and Lambton and East Bruce would seem to bear out the prophecy Mr. Blair then made. Further on he says :

It is not a commercial line we are building, it is a political line. * * * * Put this question how you will, turn it over, turn it back, examine it right and left, inside and outside, it fails to present to me—I do not know how it may appear to other hon. gentlemen in this House—a single redeeming feature in any phase of it from beginning to end.

Then, in conclusion, he says :

We are spending the money and we are getting nothing for it. I know whereof I speak in this regard. I am satisfied that the position I take is sound and cannot be controverted.

Well, Sir, that was not all. The government replied to Mr. Blair. How ? By charging him with unworthy motives. I do not wish to weary the House by reading a number of extracts which I have under my hand, but I may quote at least one or two. The hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), who, I regret to learn, is not in very good health, and not able to be present, but whose health I trust may be soon restored—that hon. gentleman was put up by the government to reply to the ex-Minister of Railways (Mr. Blair). And what was the reply of the hon. member for North Norfolk to the charge of unworthy motives made by Mr. Blair against his former colleagues ? I take it for granted that the hon. member for North Norfolk spoke on that occasion with the approval of the government, and I find that this was the reply he made. I find on reference to page 8490 of 'Hansard' that the hon. member for North Norfolk used this language :

His position yesterday, lacking as it did that dignity which ought to pertain to the position of a gentleman who resigns on high patriotic and moral grounds, and the bitterness of his attack convinced me that there is something beneath and beyond the ostensible reason assigned for his leaving the cabinet.

Perhaps it would have suited my hon. friend, the ex-Minister of Railways better if he had had the disposal of the contracts for building that road, but I think it will be constructed fully as cheaply under the arrangements arrived at.

The answer, therefore, to Mr. Blair was the tu quoque argument. The hon. gentleman attributed to Mr. Blair motives which are unworthy certainly of any member in this House, and particularly of any member of a cabinet entrusted with the granting of