

We have been treated to a great deal of mock indignation by the right hon. gentleman who leads the House for what he calls our assault on Mr. Blair. But is it not notorious that the opinions to which we have given expression are entertained, not only on this side of the House, but in the party of hon. gentlemen opposite. They are equally shared by the independent press of this country. Let me read for the benefit of the right hon. gentleman a quotation from the 'Weekly Sun' newspaper, which has not been altogether unfriendly to hon. gentlemen opposite:—

What galls the farmers most in all this is that no one pretends to say Mr. Blair has been selected for the most important public office in the country by reason of his fitness therefor. The farmers of Canada see, as the News sees, that the ex-minister has been given an office for the sole purpose of closing his mouth and preventing further criticism by him of the government's Grand Trunk Pacific project. The appointment has been made, not in the public interest, but as a matter of political expediency—to silence a man who it is feared might render it more difficult for the government to carry the country in the pending election. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has, therefore, deliberately sacrificed the interests of the people in the most important matter now before the country in order to serve his own supposed political interests. We can tell the premier he has made a mistake, even from his own point of view. The feeling of resentment which farmers have naturally entertained towards Mr. Blair because of that gentleman's attitude in the cattle-guard, drainage, and fire matters is turning towards the man who has put the ex-Minister of Railways in a position where he can work still further harm to the farmers of Canada. Sir Wilfrid Laurier might better have the opposition of one man, and a man whose fangs have been largely removed, than the just hostility of the organized farmers of Canada. Even at this late date, he would do well to reconsider the personnel of his railway commission.

! Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The hon. gentleman might give the opinion of the other 'Sun'—The St. John 'Sun.'

Mr. BENNETT. It is not necessary. The electors of St. John have given their opinion.

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

House resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. Speaker, when you left the Chair I was referring to the commission instituted by this government, particularly to the personnel of it, and more particularly to the appointment of the Hon. A. G. Blair as chairman. I quoted from the Toronto 'Sun,' a respectable and widely read journal of the province of Ontario, a strong condemnation of the government for this appointment. I think that article fairly reflects the opinion of the province of On-

tario, and not only the opinion of the province of Ontario but that of the other provinces. As was said by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden, Halifax) the appointment of the Hon. Mr. Blair can be regarded in one light and in one light only—he was removed from the arena of politics in order that this government might not be embarrassed by his presence. What was the position of the government in appointing Mr. Blair to this office? When the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway project was under discussion in this House last session no hon. gentleman assailed the project with greater bitterness or with more forceful argument than did the Hon. Mr. Blair. He pointed out in the strongest manner that it was an impossibility as a paying speculation, and that opinion we have reiterated by the independent press of the country. It was to be assumed that, if he continued in his place as a member of this House he would feel obliged to continue to condemn and repudiate that bargain in as strong language as before. Of course this government may not have cared for the expression of his opinions in this House. But there was a time and a place when they would care, and that was during an election in the province of New Brunswick. There has been a test of strength between the government and the opposition in the city of St. John, and what was the result. The speech of the Hon. Mr. Blair in this House was widely circulated in that city and the result of this and of the common knowledge of that hon. gentleman's opinion resulted in the election of a member of the opposition to this House. The people of this country look with suspicion upon the removal of a gentleman who is antagonistic to the government, especially when he is regarded peculiarly as well as this gentleman has been, this appointment as well as others proving this government to be one that is ready at all times to sacrifice the interest of this country in order that personal ends may be gratified. Why, look at the position of the government from its outset—consider how the positions of the ministers were secured by the most flagrant barter and sale of public offices. The Minister of Finance (Hon. Mr. Fielding) was not returned in the general election of 1896. He had been the prime minister of the province of Nova Scotia, and the position of the minister of finance had been promised him. Yet, though a large number of members had been returned from Nova Scotia to support the Liberal government, not a single one of them was prepared to surrender his seat and give the hon. gentleman a place in this House. What happened? A disgraceful sale of a judgeship took place, and Mr. Forbes was translated from this House to the bench. And how was it in New Brunswick? Hon. Mr. Blair had