

Grand Trunk Railway, we are bound likewise to ratify it. It is brought down by the government as a government measure, and, of course, the government will go to its supporters and order them to accept it. We may discuss this supplementary agreement as much as we like, we may propose what amendments to it we may see fit, but no change can be accepted, because the government would then have to go back to Sir Rivers Wilson, and Sir Rivers Wilson would have to call together again his shareholders and see whether they would agree to the modifications this House might see fit to make.

In connection with the Grand Trunk Pacific scheme, let me refer to the appointment of my hon. friend Mr. Blair to the chairmanship of the railway commission. It seems to me that the indictment which my hon. friend, the leader of the opposition, made against the government was rather a strong one. I was not present last session when the scheme was discussed in this House, and I listened with the greatest interest to the quotations from Mr. Blair's attack on the policy of the government in this matter. I listened also with great interest to what my hon. friends on the other side had to say about Mr. Blair in reply to his attack. And I fail to see that it is any answer for my right hon. friend to say that no better man in Canada could be found than Mr. Blair to act as chairman of the railway commission. It is no answer to say that Mr. Blair is a man of great ability and that no man better endowed could be found in Canada to fill his position. The question is this. Hon. gentlemen on the other side and their press, after Mr. Blair had denounced the scheme of the Grand Trunk Pacific, held that gentleman up to scorn, as a man who was not worthy of the confidence of the country; they held him up as a man not worthy of the confidence of his late colleagues, and one not as able as they had said he was. They held him up even as a man not worthy of their respect. I ask them whether they have changed their opinion with regard to Mr. Blair. If they have not, there must be some reason at the bottom of the appointment of Mr. Blair which is still to be explained to this House. Everybody knows—it has not been denied on the other side of the House—that during last autumn it was almost decided that the elections were to take place. I believe that the only thing necessary to fulfil the rumours which had been in the air was the actual passing of the Order in Council dissolving the House. It struck hon. gentlemen opposite, no doubt, that Mr. Blair was a very influential man in New Brunswick. He had been prime minister of his province and had carried that province time and again. In 1896 he had been elected to this House, and in 1900 he had come back as leader of New Brunswick with a large support from the province at his back. It

was well known that he was a man of influence and that he still carried great weight in his own province, and that if he was let loose—to use a rather vulgar expression—he could cause great damage to the government by going into the fight against them. (All I intend to do in this matter is to put the facts before the House and hon. gentlemen will draw their own deductions.) When it was rumoured, when it was almost certain, that elections were going to take place, Mr. Blair was appointed at \$50 a day to go down into the United States and study the results of the working of railway commissions there. This was before the railway law came into force. What was the reason for haste? Who was it that could not wait this time? Was it Mr. Blair, or was it the government? Why not wait until the railway law was proclaimed to appoint Mr. Blair chairman of this commission if he was such a great man as my hon. friends say he was? If he was such an able man that it was necessary to have him as chairman of this commission why not proclaim the Railway Act and have it come into force immediately? Why was it so necessary to pay him \$50 a day—

Mr. TAYLOR. And expenses.

Mr. CASGRAIN. And expenses, to go to the United States to study the working of railway commissions? These things in the appointment of Mr. Blair seem to me at least suspicious. Let me put this case to the House. Suppose that the elections had been called, and I, going into my constituency, found in one of the parishes an influential man who was against me, and had said to him, if you go away I will give you \$100;—if the man had gone away and I had been elected, does not the House think that I would have to destroy a very strong presumption that I had purchased this man, that I had given him \$100 to purchase his influence, and sent him away from a parish in which he could have polled a majority against me? Sir, I will not draw any inference, but will allow the House to say whether or not there is a great resemblance between the two cases.

Now, I say that this country is not satisfied with what is going on, that it is not satisfied with the tariff which hon. gentlemen opposite still persist in imposing on the country, that it is not satisfied with the Grand Trunk Pacific policy of the government. My hon. friend from North Ontario (Mr. Grant) yesterday did not say that this government was the greatest agglomeration of statesmen the country had ever seen, as had been said in 1896 and 1897, but he stated that all things considered, and human nature being what it is, it is certainly the most satisfactory government that could exist. Let me contrast the present government with the government as it stood in 1896 and for some time afterward. At that time we had Sir Oliver Mowat, who had been prime-