

by the country's money, which may make their line unprofitable—although I hope it will not do so.

That is demonstrated by the fact that when parliament met and the government announced its policy, the First Minister declared that he had seen fit not to take into his confidence the ex-Minister of Railways (Mr. Blair). The whole project had been arranged without the cognizance of his ex-colleague. Hon. gentlemen who were in the House last year must have heard the speech of the ex-Minister of Railways on that occasion. In the recollection of the oldest parliamentarian in Canada, I do not think there was ever such a scene enacted in this House as on that occasion. No man could possibly have spoken in a more bitter, sceptical and even insulting way than did the ex-Minister of Railways concerning this scheme of the government. Any hon. gentleman who sat in this House and watched the countenance of the First Minister could not have failed to notice the keenness of his annoyance at hearing the invective which came with such force from his ex-colleague. Yet, the ex-minister has had all he wants out of it. Instead of being turned into outer darkness, he forced the hands of the government to such an extent that, in spite of the acrimony of the language he used, despite all the insults he heaped on his former colleagues and the First Minister in particular, the First Minister was compelled to give him the fattest office in the gift of the government. Although the position is one which will be most trying, because of the conflicts there will be between the railway interests and the interests of the public, yet the government have placed in that position an hon. gentleman whom the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), speaking as the mouthpiece of the government denounced as practically a dishonest man. Did not the hon. member for North Norfolk last year say openly and above board that the paramount reason why the ex-Minister of Railways could not see eye to eye with the government was because he was not going to have the giving of the contracts on the road, thus insinuating that had Mr. Blair been permitted to handle the contracts, there would have been dishonesty on his part. Yet this same Mr. Blair is to-day in a position where he has to hold the scales of justice between the public and the immense corporations.

Again this government had to confess its inability to deal with the transportation question. It has said openly and above board that it is incapable of dealing with that question. A year ago the First Minister declared that the government, feeling their inability to deal with the transportation question, found it absolutely necessary to call in certain gentlemen and report to parliament. They announced that they intended to call into their assistance a board of experts who would formulate a transpor-

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tation policy. I do not think it was any too soon for them to do it when one looks upon the huge expenditure made on the canal system. But before this board of experts could report and while the ex-Minister of Railways was announcing to the government the cause of its inability to deal with the question as they should, what did we see? The government took everything out of the hands of this board of experts and these three gentlemen are peddling about the country asking information here and there, not on great questions of transportation from one side of the continent to the other, but pertaining more particularly to local affairs. In the meantime this government was plunging the country into certain large expenditures, which will be rendered practically inoperative if their present scheme be carried through. I am sorry the Minister of Railways is not in his place to-night because we might get some information from him as to what the government propose doing with certain public works when completed. For instance, we are having a huge expenditure at Port Colborne at the entrance to the Welland canal. How many millions of dollars are to be expended there the Lord only knows. It has been stated in this House that \$5,000,000 are to be expended, and we are to have not only the grain of western Canada but of the western states also carried that way. What proposition was advanced by the government when asking us to vote \$5,000,000 for that harbour? I think the hon. the Minister of Finance was acting as Minister of Public Works and he will remember that \$5,000,000 was anticipated for the expenditure at Port Colborne.

Mr. FIELDING. Anticipation on whose part?

Mr. BENNETT. On the part of the government.

Mr. FIELDING. I think there is no warrant for that.

Mr. BENNETT. For an expenditure of \$5,000,000?

Mr. FIELDING. The government did not commit themselves to any such sum.

Mr. BENNETT. What has been the expenditure already at Port Colborne?

Mr. FIELDING. I have not the figures, but they were nothing like that.

Mr. BENNETT. I have not 'Hansard' just now under my hand, but I may refresh the hon. gentleman's recollection. When the hon. member for St. Marys (Mr. Tarte) was Minister of Public Works, one evening there appeared on the table a very large plan, which was not objected to by any other member of the government. And the proposition was this. First the depth of water at Port Colborne was inadequate, and huge breakwaters were to be placed at that point. After these breakwaters were erected, on