

fears—and he must have succeeded in convincing many of our friends on this side of the House—that we were on the verge of a very grave calamity, that an awful abyss was yawning before us, that we were looking down a precipice, and were on the eve of being precipitated to its depths in everlasting ruin and disaster. And then, Sir, after my hon. friend had brought them up to the edge of that yawning precipice, he was to relieve them of their distress and anxiety by telling them, 'we have saved you by our measure; we have rescued you from the dreadful danger which was threatening you; we are going to give you an all-Canadian line, which is going to save you from the possibility of having your commerce destroyed and your business ruined by the action of the people to the south of you.' Let me refer to the language which the hon. gentleman used in that connection, in order that I may quote him with absolute accuracy. 'Luckily,' he says :

Luckily, Sir, up to this moment, we have escaped the danger with which, on repeated occasions, we have been threatened. But, sir, what would happen if at any moment there should come one of those frenzies, one of those periods of excitement which we have seen sometimes amongst nations, the American nation included. At any moment we may be deprived of the bonding privilege which we have had up to the present. The only way whereby we can contemplate such a contingency with equanimity is to provide against it, and to have upon our own territory all the facilities by which we can get access to our own harbours. These are the reasons why we apply to parliament to give its countenance to the policy which I have outlined, a policy which will give to this new Transcontinental Railway at our own harbour, by an all-Canadian route to reach it.

Now, I want to ask the calm reason and judgment of this parliament—and, if need be, the appeal will have to be made to the calm judgment and sober reason of the people of Canada—when we have had the bonding privilege between Canada and the United States in existence for all these years; when, if ever there was a danger, that danger has been minimized; when the conditions existing in the United States are just as potent to prevent the possibility of any such action being taken by the United States government; when the number of American railways crossing our territory from one portion of that country to another, and the shipping which comes to the leading ports of the United States, are carrying to the merchants of Canada and from the dealers in Canada goods which are a profit to them; when they would be actually striking at and destroying their own trade and commerce if they adopted such a course—why my hon. friend should feel impelled at this late date, after all these years, and after we have been seven years in the government of this country and have never felt even a thrill by reason of that possibility—why my hon. friend and the government for whom he speaks should come to us now,

Hon. Mr. BLAIR.

in the frenzied rush, the impetuous haste, which has inspired this legislation, and tell us that we are in deadly peril, and in the utmost danger of having our commerce destroyed by the action of a friendly government? I ask the members of this House why is this pretense put forward, or this argument—I will not knowingly use any term offensive to any of my hon. friends here—why is this argument put forward? It must be because there is an absence of real, good, substantial argument to sustain the case itself, and my hon. friends feel obliged to appeal to the prejudices and feelings, and to arouse the passions of the people of Canada in order to carry through a measure which, on its merits, they would have no hope whatever of carrying. I noticed that when both this and the preceding defence were made by the right hon. gentleman, our friends on this side of the House were wild with enthusiasm. I do not know whether the enthusiasm was because of the relief which seemed to come to them after the period of strained anxiety was over, on account of the boundary peril or whether the real reason was that they felt great satisfaction in finding that even a flimsy argument could be made in support of the government's policy.

Now, Sir, what foundation is there, I ask, for the statement that our conditions, when this road is built, if it ever is built, will be any different from what they are to-day? I want to know upon what foundation is the suggestion made that we are in deadly peril by reason of the possible action of a frenzied people, if frenzy should seize the people of the American republic. Why, Sir, we have to-day a railroad which traverses this continent; we have two railroads which run to the province of New Brunswick, with both of which connection could be made if need be; and we need not pass over American territory, even though the restriction were sought to be placed upon us by the American government. We could avail ourselves of those railroads, and they are just as transcontinental, just as Canadian, just as national, as any railroads we could construct in Canada. They are railroads on Canadian soil, and one of them at least is owned by the government of the country itself.

For myself I would have much preferred that this argument, at all events, had not been presented by my right hon. friend. I would have much preferred that it had been left to somebody else to declare to the world at large that the Canadian people are at the mercy of any other people. I am loath to acknowledge that we have not in ourselves to-day the means to protect ourselves against any such possibility, and I do not like to have the word go across the ocean and throughout the wide world that Canada is hemmed in by the United States and unable to protect herself, or, what is very much the equivalent, that it requires