

penditure on the Intercolonial Railway less valuable, and less effective, and in order to injure materially the people who live along that line.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. BLAIR. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I say in order to materially injure these people, because I take it that it is a matter worthy of some little consideration that the people who have been living on the line of the Intercolonial Railway, who have been enjoying the advantages of the service it affords and it has been a good service—these people have built upon the line of railway at different points in expectation that this condition of things would continue; but now the prospect is held out to them, that for the purpose of carrying out an idea, the origin of which I do not absolutely know and the purpose of which I have not been able to discover up to this moment; these people are to be deprived of those advantages and to be put as it were on a back street and on a local road, and deprived of these facilities on account of which they have invested their money in the expectation that they would always be permitted to enjoy the same consideration and advantages. 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.

You will notice, Sir, that the Intercolonial Railway has greatly improved its business in the last few years. Seven years ago the total amount of business done on the Intercolonial Railway was about \$3,000,000, and to-day, if my memory serves me right, it is nearly \$7,000,000. The Intercolonial Railway came to Montreal to get business; it extended its line to secure through-traffic, and we expended a large amount of money and assumed considerable obligations in connection with that extension. We have expended \$15,000,000 at least in extensions and improvements, in the betterment of the Intercolonial, in the modernizing of the Intercolonial. That has been the policy continued for seven years, constantly, without variation, uniformly, without a doubt expressed on this side of the House as to the wisdom of that policy until to-day. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition said the other night that we were reversing the policy which we had pursued during all these years. I go further; I say we are doing more; we are condemning that policy. We are not only condemning it, but we are writing our own condemnation in letters which will never be obliterated. 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. I think I can show this House that a little thought and consideration would have led to the staying of the hands of my colleagues who were determined that this thing should be carried out.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is a curious question as to the origin of this idea. We had this grand, from-ocean-to-ocean, transcontinental, all-Canadian line; we had all that; we were told about that, and the newspapers were advised that the Grand Trunk Railway Company was going to make this application. When the transcontinental scheme from Quebec to the Pacific ocean was in contemplation, we had discussed it for a long time before we heard of the idea of this Moncton extension. When did we first hear of it? We first heard of it when the session was half through. It was first mooted when the Grand Trunk Pacific Bill came before the House. I am told by those who profess to know—I do not know myself, and if it is not true it can be contradicted—that the reason why the Moncton extension was proposed was that when the Grand Trunk Pacific Bill was going through the Railway Committee, it was thought by those opposed to that Bill that it could be defeated by a proposition of that kind, because nobody would swallow it, and the whole Bill would be thrown out. That is what I have been told. What is the fact? The fact is that the proposition first appeared on a motion to amend the Bill by requiring that the line should be extended to Moncton, and the further proposition that construction should commence on that section at the same time as on the other portions of the road. A few days, possibly a few weeks—I did not count the time—are all that are necessary to pass by until we have this Moncton proposition as one of the essential elements in a grand transcontinental, all-Canadian line—something that was never thought of before. What would have become of this scheme if the Moncton addition had not been made to it, I do not know. It would certainly have been wanting in what is now regarded as a most essential element in the whole scheme—the all-Canadian idea of it; and probably it was in this connection that the right hon. leader of the government found warrant for his fear of the withdrawal of the bonding privilege. So that idea was given birth to only after the session had been pretty well advanced, and within two or three weeks after that it is adopted solemnly and seriously by the government of this country as a part of their transcontinental scheme. Whatever time or thought may have been devoted, in quiet or in secret, to the character of the scheme generally, certainly before that time no thought was devoted to this feature; and we have this element of it determined upon within the short period