

mediate construction of such a road, can be disposed of, I believe, with a single observation. To those who urge upon us the policy of to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow; to those who tell us, wait, wait, wait; to those who advise us to pause, to consider, to reflect, to calculate and to inquire, our answer is: No, this is not a time for deliberation, this is a time for action. The flood of tide is upon us that leads on to fortune; if we let it pass it may never recur again. If we let it pass, the voyage of our national life, bright as it is to-day, will be bound in shallows. We cannot wait, because time does not wait; we cannot wait because, in these days of wonderful development, time lost is doubly lost; we cannot wait, because at this moment there is a transformation going on in the conditions of our national life which it would be folly to ignore and a crime to overlook. . . . We say that to-day it is the duty of the Canadian government, it is the duty of the Canadian parliament, it is the duty of all those who have a mandate from the people to attend to the needs and requirements of this fast growing country, to give heed to that condition of things. We consider that it is the duty of all those who sit within these walls by the will of the people, to provide immediate means whereby the products of those new settlers may find an exit to the ocean at the least possible cost; and whereby, likewise, a market may be found in this new region for those who toil in the forests, in the fields, in the mines, in the shops of the older provinces. Such is our duty; it is immediate and imperative. It is not of to-morrow, but of this day, of this hour and of this minute. Heaven grant that it be not already too late; heaven grant that whilst we tarry and dispute, the trade of Canada is not deviated to other channels.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is only fair that I should call the grave and serious attention of this parliament and of this country to the statement which the right hon. gentleman has made. As I said, it is not a denial of the charge that there has been want of deliberation and undue and improper haste in this matter. It is not a denial of the charge that the government have not studied the question, and before I conclude my observations on this Bill, this resolution and this contract, I think I will convince the majority—well, I will convince the minds of the majority of this House at all events, that what is alleged against the government in this regard is absolutely and entirely true.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. BLAIR. What does the right hon. gentleman mean when he says—

The flood of tide is upon us that leads on to fortune; if we let it pass it may never recur again.

What does the right hon. gentleman mean when he says:

If we let it pass the voyage of our national life bright as it is to-day will be bound in shallows.

What does the right hon. gentleman mean when he says:

We cannot wait because time does not wait.

I think, Mr. Speaker, and I say it with all respect to my right hon. friend, that

it would have been as correct if not so poetic for him to have said: We cannot wait because Senator Cox cannot wait.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. BLAIR. What does the right hon. gentleman mean by saying:

We cannot wait because in these days of wonderful development time lost is doubly lost.

What does he mean by saying: that to wait would be to destroy our future national life. Wherein is our national life going to be destroyed because perchance we take the proper time in order to study what we are doing, and in order to reach a wise and just conclusion with regard to an enterprise which is vaster, greatly vaster than any that has ever before engaged the consideration of this parliament. I fail to discover wherein we have to appeal to heaven against the possibility of a little delay in this matter. I know of no reason why the interests of Canada are going to be prejudicially affected because when we move forward we see the end, or think we see the end, to which we are looking, because we know the limits of the responsibilities by which we assume to be bound, and because we believe we understand the conditions under which we are operating. Why is it said by my hon. friend in this manner and in these terms, that we must not pause a moment to deliberate? Government may possibly not deliberate, but parliament has a right to deliberate, the country has a right to deliberate; and in my judgment, Sir, before we impose a burden of such great magnitude on the neck of the people of Canada, before we commit this country by an Act of this parliament to a scheme of such large and extraordinary proportions, it is only just to the people of Canada that they should have a chance to talk it over, and think about it, that the press should discuss it, and that everybody in the country should know what the government are contemplating. I cannot help feeling that it is rather a condition of hysteria than a condition of calm reason and judgment—I cannot help feeling that it is a condition of sentimental exaltation that has inspired the hurry and haste with which this measure is pressed forward; because I will not believe it possible that any other than a straightforward and honourable motive has inspired my colleagues in this transaction.

My hon. friend, having disposed of this question of want of deliberation, proceeds to take up another question which he regards as one of very grave and serious magnitude. With all the skill of an old parliamentary hand, with all the deftness and ability which we know he can successfully employ; my hon. friend, referring to Carnegie and his threats, quoting what was said by President Cleveland, reading from despatches, and otherwise, succeeded in working up our anxiety and arousing our