

the right hon. gentleman has not made very plain.

In conclusion I wish to go back for a moment to a subject which I have already mentioned, the attitude of this government in the first place with regard to the amendment to the Transcontinental Railway Act, and in the second place to the appointment of Hon. Mr. Blair as chairman of the Railway Committee. Does my right hon. friend remember his language of last year? Does he remember his words when he said:

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.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire in view of that language of my right hon. friend how it is that when this measure was consummated by the signing of this agreement, when that agreement bound the gentlemen who were parties to it, when these gentlemen declared that this road was to go on, when these gentlemen put up a guarantee representing one million pounds sterling, when they declared through their official head that they were prepared to go on with the railway this spring without amendment, how is it that my right hon. friend has called to them: Wait, wait, wait, till we get before parliament and give you further concessions. What about the flood tide then? He did not then regard the flood-tide but hastened the opening of parliament in order that there might be further amendments.

But, at that time he said further:

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 may not be already too late; Heaven grant that whilst we tarry and dispute, the trade of Canada is not deviated to other channels.

Then he insisted upon haste. Now he says, "Wait, wait, wait, until we once more go before parliament with practically a new measure, and can insert in this agreement a provision providing that this railway shall be completed not in 1908, but in 1911. He now says wait, wait, wait until we can attach a provision to this contract by reason of which the completion of this road should be delayed for three years beyond the time in which it was to be completed if the contract as originally designed had been carried out.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax).

Last year when he called upon us to ratify this measure he did so in very earnest terms. He said:

I can appeal with some confidence to the judgment of the House to ratify with earnestness and with joy the contract which I have the honour to lay upon the Table.

I suppose my right hon. friend will call upon us to receive with even greater earnestness and with redoubled joy the amendments which he will shortly propose to the consideration of this House. I do not know whether we shall all radiate with joy at these further concessions to the Grand Trunk Railway Company. Possibly hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House who declared this to be a heaven born measure last year will now declare it to be a measure that it is absolutely necessary to amend in the best interest of the country by giving further concessions to that company. I imagine that will be the attitude of my hon. friends opposite. I remember very well their attitude of last year.

But, passing from that, what must have been the attitude of my right hon. friend when he offered the chairmanship of the railway commission to my friend Mr. Blair? What was the interview which took place? No account of it has been divulged to the public. We can only draw upon our imaginations and I would suppose that my right hon. friend must have addressed the ex-Minister of Railways and Canals in some such words as these: Sir, you have impugned our motives, you have declared them unworthy, you have attacked with great bitterness our great transportation project which we regard as absolutely necessary to the salvation of this country. You have assailed it with ridicule, you have declared it to be born of madness and hysteria. You have pledged your faith as a man versed in railway matters that it is a wanton, scandalous and unjustifiable waste of public money; therefore, we think, that, in the best interests of the country you are the most suitable person to appoint as chairman of the great commission. If my friend, Mr. Blair, showed a little modest hesitation in accepting the position, my right hon. friend could proceed as follows and I suppose he must have proceeded as follows: He could have said: Especially is this a suitable appointment since we also have declared that you are acting from unworthy and improper motives since we have declared that you resigned because we were afraid to entrust you with the expenditure of public money upon a great enterprise such as this, and because you are a man of narrow views, small and shifty, swayed by passion and prejudice and unworthy to unloose the latchet of the shoe of the prime minister. In view of all this you are an eminently proper person to appoint as chairman of this high judicial tribunal. Lest I may be accused of exaggeration in this statement, let me quote the