

as July the 11th, the hon the Postmaster General (Hon. Sir William Mulock) sought to keep up the idea that the government were still considering the reference of the question of the problem of railway transportation to an expert commission; but almost immediately afterwards, we heard rumours of the government proposing to build the road from Moncton to Winnipeg and of dissensions in the cabinet. On July the 10th Mr. Blair's resignation was tendered, but kept secret. On July 15th his resignation was announced, and on July 30th the Prime Minister introduced the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Bill and declared that there was no time for deliberation or investigation. What was it that changed the opinion of the members of this government during that short time? On May the 19th we had this address. On that date, the government were certainly well settled in the view that the whole matter should be referred to this commission on transportation. On July the 11th, the Postmaster General, as I have said, kept up the fiction that the government were still considering the question of referring the transportation problem to an expert commission. They named as chairman, Sir William Van Horne, and I may be permitted just to quote some statements made by that gentleman in connection with this matter. In Toronto, on August the 5th, he was interviewed, and in that interview he said:

The Canadian Pacific Railway, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, or any other all-Canadian route, will never voluntarily carry a carload of wheat by the all-railway route around the great lakes to an eastern Canadian port for shipment abroad, for the simple reason that it will never pay any road to do so. Not will the transportation problems in the west ever be solved by the construction of an all-Canadian route from coast to coast.

Sir William was, moreover, of opinion that, as far as the development of the west was concerned, there was no need for any other transcontinental line. The idea of a line having to be built for strategic purposes he characterized as the result of the bogey which now and again seized upon some minds through an excess of fear of the States.

'Have we not already,' asked Sir William, 'an all-Canadian line from Quebec to Vancouver? Doesn't it run entirely within Canadian territory? For a line to be built away up along the north for the purpose of tapping the west would be altogether futile. Very little grain at all comes down from the part of the Dominion through which it was proposed to run that line. The Canadian Pacific Railway may take a carload of wheat out of it now and again. But I state this emphatically that no all-Canadian line, I care not by whom it is built or run, will voluntarily draw a single carload of wheat east of Port Arthur over its tracks. We occasionally take one when the traffic by boat is congested, in the winter, when any special need arises. The usual practice, however, is to convey wheat by boat through Lake Erie canal.'

Before we commit this country to a scheme of such magnitude it is only right that the people of Canada should be given an opportunity to fully consider it. What chance is given them? The scheme is brought down at the end of the session, it never received any consideration until it came before this House on July the 30th, and if, as is generally reported, we are to go before the people within a few months, what opportunity will the people have to decide on this measure? The decision will have been taken out of their hands, for by that time this parliament will have passed the Bill and bound the country to the construction of this transcontinental line. The right hon. the First Minister says that a line of railway from the shores of the Atlantic to the shores of the Pacific is a national as well as a commercial necessity. One would infer from that statement that such a road does not exist now. But we all know that it does. We all know that we have a road from ocean to ocean on Canadian territory, so that this bogey raised by the right hon. gentleman has no foundation and we need pay no attention to it. I notice, as the debate goes on, that our friends on the other side are not paying any attention to this bugaboo of the bonding privilege. They see that the whole thing is utterly ridiculous and that the people look upon it as a most ridiculous argument for the construction of this road. But when did the right hon. gentleman discover that this proposed line is an urgent and immediate necessity? On March 12th, when this House opened, he had not discovered its pressing necessity. On May 19 when this address, regarding the transportation commission was voted, he had not discovered it. He seemed only to have become aware of it on July the 30th. I say, Mr. Speaker, that this proposed road is not an urgent and immediate necessity. I have no desire, even for a moment, to belittle the great resources of the Dominion. I have just as much faith in the great resources of this country as any man in this House.

I have no doubt that in the northern part of Quebec there are great elements of wealth. I believe also that in certain sections of the northern part of Ontario there may be great wealth, but we know nothing whatever about it. Would it not have been better to have this transportation commission go on and make a thorough investigation of the transportation problems of this country? Would it not have been better for the government to take a little time; to have an amount of money appropriated for the purpose of sending survey parties out to have that country thoroughly explored to the end that we may know exactly what we have in that northern region, before plunging into a scheme of this magnitude, involving a cost to this country, as I said before, from \$100,000,000 to \$120,000,000?