

hon. gentleman is forcing this scheme upon the country at the present time? How does the present position differ from that which existed when he introduced his resolution in reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway? When it was proposed to build that road north of Lake Superior he introduced a resolution declaring that through that inhospitable and unsettled country no road should be built and that the money proposed to be expended in that direction could be expended in other directions with more profit to the people? The scheme which he proposes is one entirely differing from that which the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company proposed. The president of the railway company stated in his address: The plan which I propose is one for the purpose of getting from North Bay to Winnipeg, and of enabling us to build from Winnipeg through the prairie section of the country over to the Pacific ocean. The other part of the scheme, he said, was proposed by the right hon. gentleman who leads this government to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company to be added to their scheme. There is no necessity for it, they do not need it, it is not part of their scheme at all, it is a proposition of the right hon. gentleman. The right hon. gentleman found fault with and criticised very severely the remarks of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition on the appointment of Mr. Blair as chairman of the railway commission. My hon. friend stated that that gentleman, speaking in this House as to the policy of the government in reference to the transcontinental railway, had insinuated—an insinuation declared by the hon. Minister of Justice (Hon. Mr. Fitzpatrick) to be unfounded—that this contract was being made for the purpose of benefiting private individuals. My hon. friend has pointed out that the charge has never been withdrawn by Mr. Blair. It still remains in force. But, the right hon. leader of the government says: Oh, because there might be a little private pique, or because he differs from me on a great political question, is that a reason why the country should not accept the services of the most intelligent and best informed man on railway subjects in the Dominion?

I deny that Mr. Blair is qualified for any such position. Judging by his management of the Intercolonial Railway, and the gross extravagance, and perhaps worse that he perpetrated in reference to that railroad, he is the last man that should be selected for a position of that kind. Let us see what is the opinion of the Prime Minister himself on this matter. When he conceived his transcontinental railway scheme did he consult Mr. Blair? Did he ask his opinion about it? The Prime Minister now tells us that Mr. Blair is better informed than any man in the country in railway matters, but the Prime Minister conceived and brought forth his railway project without the advice of

Mr. Blair, and even without consulting him. If the chairman of the railway commission is so well qualified for the office he fills; if Mr. Blair is one of the best informed railway men of the country; then the inference is that the Prime Minister considers himself better informed in this respect, because he did not seek to have Mr. Blair reflect any of his light upon him? And as to Mr. Blair's colleagues on the railway commission what shall we say? There is Mr. Bernier, a very respectable man, who was Minister of Inland Revenue, and there is Mr. Mills, a gentleman about whom I know nothing. Even the warmest friends of Mr. Bernier never thought he had any qualifications for such an office. As to Mr. Mills, I never heard his name mentioned in connection with transportation matters; I heard he was connected with the Guelph Agriculture College, but I never heard that he had any qualifications to be a railway commissioner. These are the gentlemen we have had appointed to one of the most important courts of the land. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition has suggested that probably Mr. Blair was appointed, because it was expected there would be a general election last fall, and Mr. Blair having an influence in the province of New Brunswick, might exercise it against the government if he were not placated by this office. The right hon. the Prime Minister denies that allegation, but nevertheless it is believed by the people from one end of the country to the other. It is believed, and I think correctly, that Mr. Blair was appointed chairman of the commission in order to silence him during the election. Mr. Blair may be qualified as a lawyer, but as I said before, judging from his extravagant management of the Intercolonial Railway, he has no claim to be considered in any sense as an expert on railway matters. Taking it on the whole, there can be little doubt that the railway commissioners were appointed for political purposes and not because they were qualified to discharge the duties of the office. We have as chairman of that commission a gentleman who charged the government with entering into this transcontinental scheme for corrupt purposes; as the Minister of Justice interpreted his language. We have in Mr. Blair a gentleman with reference to whom the followers of the Prime Minister rose one after another in the House, and stated that the reason he was not continuing to support the government was because he would not have the letting of the contracts for the transcontinental railroad. Let me ask the Prime Minister, if he has ever really considered what the cost of a railroad will be from Winnipeg to Quebec, and from Quebec to Moncton. I wonder if he ever really intends to build any such railroad. Does he know that the railroad from Winnipeg to Port Arthur cost \$80,000 or \$90,000 a mile for grading? Has he looked at the expenditure on the railroad that