

ried out his intention I will proceed. The reasons why I do not approve of Sir William Meredith are these: We have here a stupendous task for some man—some man who is more or less versed and well informed on the question with which he is going to deal. Sir William Meredith is not versed or well informed on the highly technical matters with which he will be called upon to deal. If Sir William Meredith had been engaged for many years in the study of these questions, as the Minister of Finance or the comptroller of the Railway Department, Mr. Graham Bell, have been it would be a different thing. But Sir William Meredith is no longer young; he has reached an age when it is impossible for him to grasp new things of the magnitude of this railway problem, and do justice to it. We can be sure that the Canadian Northern will have to look after their interests men who are in the prime of life, whose minds are alert and well-versed in these matters. Any of us who have seen contests in the courts knows that it will be impossible for Sir William Meredith to do justice to the people's interests in that tribunal, and I should be failing in the discharge of my duty if I did not say that I believe that a man of the age of Sir William Meredith, who is now not far from four score, will not be equal to the great task before him. I plead even at this date with the Minister of Finance to choose some other man; for he can find some other man who would be more equal, mentally, and by information, training, and learning, to this task. The Minister of Trade and Commerce turns it into a joke, but when it comes to a question of spending \$60,000,000 of the people's money, even the smile on the face of the Minister of Finance at this moment will not make me say other than that this is a matter too grave to be dismissed with a smile from the Minister of Finance or an ironical remark from the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

We have Sir Henry Drayton, a man who has studied railway matters closely, and who in his capacity as solicitor for a great corporation in the city of Toronto has no doubt become very well versed in these matters. He is in the very prime of life, and a friend of hon. gentlemen opposite; he would be incomparably superior to Sir William Meredith as an arbitrator. It is a remarkable thing that in all these commissions the Government never think of appointing anybody but friends of their own, and that is another thing I have against

[Mr. Knowles.]

Sir William Meredith. It is well known that he is a Tory of the Tories he is the right hand man—the man Friday, so to speak—of the Ontario Government. It is a well known fact that for years they have taken counsel with him in all the great measures they have brought down, and that he helps draft their legislation. That is the belief in the public mind, and instead of doing anything to aggravate the suspicions of the people, the Government should endeavour to inspire them with confidence. That in itself is an unanswerable argument why a man should be appointed who is considered to be entirely dissociated from politics and from all political activity, and people have not that belief about Sir William Meredith. Whether it is true or not I cannot say, but the fact remains that Sir William Meredith is still believed to be very closely associated with the Conservative party. The Government seem to think that they must always appoint friends of their own to these commissions. But that is a source of weakness to the Government. If the Minister of Finance wishes to appoint a judge to this position, why does he not endeavour to restore public confidence by appointing a judge who is not the appointee of the Conservative party? What did the Liberals in Manitoba do in connection with the investigation into the Agricultural College and other buildings? They appointed a man fresh from the Bar. Mr. Justice Galt, the appointee of the late Minister of Public Works. If the Government want a judge they could have appointed Mr. Justice Cassels.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Hear, hear.

Mr. KNOWLES: Mr. Justice Cassels has had long experience in these matters. Although an appointee of the Liberal party, while at the Bar he was a supporter of the Conservative party. He is in every way far better qualified for this position than Sir William Meredith.

Mr. PUGSLEY: The Government would not appoint him after the Quebec and Saguenay case.

Mr. KNOWLES: It makes the public mind more suspicious than ever, and that is the point I am urging for the sake of the Government itself. It ought to allay public suspicion, and restore public confidence by reconsidering the suggestion that Sir William Meredith should be an arbitrator. The matters which have been dealt with in this debate are so long and so deep