

decided not to enter upon a decision as to this matter hastily. They have weighed all the arguments and all the conditions in relation to this case, and they have arrived at their decision after due deliberation. Whether that decision is correct or incorrect it has not been arrived at hastily; it has not been arrived at without full consideration of every circumstance and condition that had a bearing upon the matter.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. CHARLTON. My hon. friend (Hon. Mr. Blair) says that the Prime Minister held that the necessity for the construction of this road was imminent, and he presented that statement as a reflection upon the judgment of the Prime Minister, as an evidence that the Prime Minister has acted hastily, as an evidence that the Prime Minister has been influenced by considerations that are not considerations of wisdom, and that in fact, the statement of the Prime Minister for the construction of this road was imminent, is an ill-founded assertion. The hon. gentleman (Hon. Mr. Blair) spoke as though the proposal was either to wait a little while, as he recommends, or to plunge into this project and have the road next year. Why, Sir, we are not to have the road next year; it is not a question as to whether we should have a transcontinental line immediately, but the necessity for it is imminent.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. CHARLTON. This line cannot be constructed in less than five years. In the meantime, a great tide of immigration is pouring into the North-west. What will be the condition of things in that country five years from to-day? Its productions will have increased; they may be doubled; they possibly may by that time be quadrupled, and the government is simply taking time by the forelock, taking into consideration conditions not as they exist to-day, but as they will exist as soon or sooner than they can provide the means to meet these conditions. And so, I repeat, that the necessity is imminent. We shall need transportation facilities in the North-west as fast if not faster than they can be provided. Every bushel of wheat that is raised in that country; all the productions of its soil, must find their egress from that country by rail. It is not situated as are the western states of the United States, with great channels of communication, with rivers flowing to the sea, rivers that furnish outlets to commerce; but the productions of our west must reach the tidewater or the great lakes by rail. Our prairie region must have railway facilities for every farmer there is in it, and so the government is not only taking into consideration the circumstances that now exist but the conditions that inevitably will exist. The government has made a reasonable calculation as to what conditions they have got to meet five years from to-day; they have realized that

these conditions will imperatively demand additional transportation facilities, and they have set themselves to work, not with undue haste, not prematurely, but they have set themselves to work at a time when it was necessary to take action and enter upon a course of policy which will result in meeting this emergency when it does arrive.

My hon. friend (Hon. Mr. Blair) in the course of his speech indulged in one remark which possibly, upon mature reflection, and when he is cool, and has a candid moment, he will regret, and that is, Sir, to attribute to this government the desire to please Senator Cox.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

Mr. CHARLTON. Let my hon. friends on the opposite side cheer. I do not know whether such action is quite consistent with the course they have hitherto pursued, or whether it strikes them as a natural thing to do; but I do think it was an imputation unworthy of the hon. gentleman, applied to the colleagues with whom he had recently acted, and applied under these circumstances, when we are facing a great national emergency.

An hon. MEMBER. A crisis.

Mr. CHARLTON. No, not a crisis. When we are simply taking such action as prudence requires for promoting the interests of this young nation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would inquire whether our judgment as to this measure should not be governed by a careful examination into the character of the undertaking? It is a very easy thing to raise questions to befog a case; a very easy thing to appeal to prejudices, to ascribe motives, to bring in Senator Cox and other irrelevant matters. But what we want to examine into on this occasion is this: What is the character of this proposition which the government have laid before this House of Commons? I think, Mr. Speaker, that the proposition is a good one. That is my opinion. I have examined it carefully, and I have arrived at that conclusion dispassionately, simply because an examination of all the conditions bearing on the case forces that conclusion upon me. Other gentlemen may arrive at a different conclusion.

An hon. MEMBER. Sure.

Mr. CHARLTON. Some hon. gentleman says sure. Quite likely many of them will. Their conclusions may be just as honest as mine. Mine may be based on fallacious reasons; the same may be said of theirs. It is for us to sit down calmly and argue out this question, to avoid appeals to prejudice and to party spirit, if that is possible, and to judge this proposition upon its merits. It may be that the hon. ex-Minister of Railways thought he was doing this; but if he did, I do not think he grasped very accurately or very fully the merits of the scheme.