

Mr. Blair explained a few days ago to the Halifax Board of Trade how improbable it was that either the Grand Trunk Railway or the Canadian Pacific would hand over to the Intercolonial at Montreal any considerable portion, if any portion whatever, of the traffic originating on those lines. The grain carried as far as Montreal by the Canadian Pacific when not shipped at that port, will continue to be carried over the Canadian Pacific until it reaches its ocean terminus at St. John, and the traffic originating on the Grand Trunk will under like circumstances continue to be carried over the Grand Trunk until it reaches its ocean terminus at Portland.

These are the deliberate expressions of the hon. gentleman. He concluded as follows:—

The Intercolonial must as to this class of business for ever continue to play second fiddle to these great company lines, until it can establish a connection that will plant it right in the heart of the great distributing centres and emporiums of the west. Not until then will it ever be in a position to compete on even terms with its rivals for the grain carrying business of the Dominion. If anybody can suggest a better move in this direction than the acquisition, if necessary, of the Parry Sound road, he should have the floor.

I think, Mr. Speaker, I should give the floor to the hon. member for Hants just now in order that he may give some explanation for this volte face, this great change in his opinions since he penned and made public his letter. It would be interesting to have him explain how he came to take his present position after putting himself on record as strongly advocating on business, patriotic and national grounds the very scheme which the leader of the opposition is now presenting to this country.

But there is just one word more in connection with this matter which I would like to say. The Minister of the Interior and some other gentlemen who took part in this debate have pointed out that there is a difficulty in the way of utilizing the Intercolonial Railway instead of building a parallel line, and it is that the route would be so much longer. The Minister of the Interior the other day estimated that the additional mileage under the scheme of the leader of the opposition, of carrying the Intercolonial Railway west to Winnipeg and on to the coast would be 327 miles as compared with the present proposition. After the Minister of the Interior, I think the hon. member for Hants and the hon. member for Annapolis have between them taken up the mantle which has fallen from the shoulders of the hon. member for North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton). They are to-day the chief spokesmen and experts on matters connected with railway administration who are not members of the cabinet. My hon. friend from Hants, in a speech last year on this very question of the value of a shorter route, made a declaration in reference to a statement by the hon. member for North Victoria (Mr. Hughes). The hon. member for

Mr. CLARKE.

Victoria said that a matter of three or four hundred miles in the length of a railway does not make any difference in rates. And the hon. member for Hants (Mr. Russell) approved of that, and said:—

Anybody who knows anything about railroads has had that fact brought to his attention.

Last year the argument was presented to us that, in a transcontinental railway such as the one we are discussing to-day, a matter of three or four hundred miles did not make much difference in rates. That statement was made by the hon. member for Victoria, and was approved and endorsed by the hon. member for Hants. When the hon. member for Hants was asked why, if that was the case, he did not approve of the proposition to hand over the traffic at Quebec to the Intercolonial, instead of building another line for it to run over, he said:

The Intercolonial is a different thing altogether. It is a short piece of railway which does not connect with the great centres of the west. The principle does not apply to a short line as it does to a long one.

So, the hon. gentleman has an argument to meet any and every emergency. Yet he stands beside his colleague from Annapolis (Mr. Wade) and joins in denunciation of the leader of the opposition whose object is to perpetuate the Intercolonial by extending it westward as a most important factor in the regulation of freight rates throughout Canada for all time to come. What did the motion of the leader of the opposition say?

2. The extension of the Intercolonial Railway to the Georgian Bay and thence to Winnipeg, and the extension and improvement in the province of Quebec and in the maritime provinces of the government system of railways.

I believe that policy commends itself to the people of this country. I believe it will especially commend itself to the people of the maritime provinces. And notwithstanding the attacks, the unfair attacks as I claim, that are being made upon the leader of the opposition in the maritime provinces, the people will appreciate his services, they will appreciate the sacrifices he is making, and when the opportunity is given them they will endorse and approve his policy. The leader of the opposition is being opposed, he is being misrepresented in the maritime provinces because, it is charged, he is unfaithful to their interests. The same method of attack is followed in the west where the leader of the opposition is also being misrepresented because it is said his policy is inimical to the interests of the west and especially of the great city of Winnipeg. During the last session the leader of the opposition defined his position quite clearly, and I desire to put on record the statement he then made. It disposes effectually of the unmanly and unfair attacks that are resorted to by friends of hon. gentlemen op-