

portant, the construction of this road has brought to light the fact that in Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan there is great mineral and other wealth which will place this part of the country on a par with any other part of Canada, if not in a better position. It has also brought to light the fact that the Hudson Bay itself may be and will be looked upon in the future as one of our national assets. Without taking up any further time, therefore, I wish simply to urge upon the minister and upon the Government as strongly as I can the desirability of incurring no further delay in completing this road. Further delay means great loss, directly in money and indirectly in the development of the North country,—and the letter has already been delayed altogether too long. Therefore, on behalf of the West as well as on behalf of the whole of Canada, I urge that in connection with this national enterprise some work of construction be done this year; that at least an additional mileage of rails be laid, which work will have exceedingly beneficial effects and besides serve as a guarantee of good faith on the part of the Government.

(Three members, Mr. Chisholm, Mr. Lafortune and Mr. Caldwell having risen at the same time):

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, but I promised Mr. Chisholm two hours ago that I would see him next.

Mr. LAFORTUNE: I have only a question to put.

Mr. CALDWELL: Has the minister forgotten to answer my question?

The CHAIRMAN: We will let Mr. Lafortune put his question; then Mr. Caldwell will receive his answer; then Mr. Chisholm will have the floor.

Mr. LAFORTUNE: May I ask the minister if he has a few dollars to spend for the repair of the Lachine lock bridge?

Mr. J. D. REID: I understand that a walk is wanted across the locks. We are investigating that whole matter with a view to seeing whether we can give the accommodation along the lines suggested by the hon. member.

Mr. LAFORTUNE: It is very urgent.

Mr. J. D. REID: Yes, I know.

Mr. CALDWELL: The minister did not answer my question when he was dealing with the remarks made by other hon. gentlemen.

[Mr. Campbell.]

Mr. J. D. REID: I will answer when my hon. friend (Mr. Chisholm) gets through.

Mr. CHISHOLM: My only reason for imposing upon the indulgence of the committee at this hour is to express my regret that the Government has not seen fit to carry out what I regard as a promise made last year, or at least what I expected would be done in view of the statements made at that time. I refer to the Inverness railway. I am like my hon. friend (Mr. Loggie); the first speech I made in the House was in respect to an extension of railways in the county of Inverness, and I have ever since continued session after session to keep before the Government the urgency for railway extension. I had hoped that the Government would not fail to acquire this branch line in view of the great traffic possibilities which would result from the development of our immensely varied and valuable natural resources. The Government did make certain proposals to the owners of that road, or rather to the bondholders with a view to getting control of it, but I thought at the time that the price offered was entirely too low. I realized the importance of this railway from the standpoint of traffic. I knew of the great wealth of western Cape Breton island and also how important it was that the railway passing through that zone should be in the hands of some concern that was not entirely concentrating its efforts on the development of its own properties. The Government I regarded as the proper party to own it. The Inverness railway was constructed by the Inverness Railway Company in 1897-98. They owned coal properties down there, but so far as I can see or so far as the people of Inverness can see, the company has never done anything to encourage the development of our resources or to extend its line beyond its coal mines but haul its own coal and discourage the development of other coal mines. They have defeated any effort in this direction on the part of other industrial undertakings. You will marvel at the lack of development in my county, in view of the importance of coal, when I tell you that in that zone from Port Hood north there is estimated to be 1,300,000,000 tons of first-class bituminous coal. This estimate is the result of investigations made by qualified officers of both federal and provincial governments.

The Inverness railway probably owned about one-tenth of that coal. Two coal properties were operated on a small scale along the course of this railway, but owing to the policy of the Mackenzie and Mann