

*The Budget—Mr. Fane*

from the C.N.R. saying they had considered all the alternative routes and decided that this was the only route they could follow because in the future someone might wish to start an industrial area in the land embraced by these river lots.

That, Mr. Speaker, is just plain, ordinary untruthfulness, because the company could have built this line a quarter of a mile north beside the road allowance at the north end of these river lots. It would not have caused any inconvenience really to the people concerned because it would have taken only a right of way 100 feet or 200 feet wide from the north end of their farms.

The company could have paid for this land and the line could then have followed what is called the Victoria Trail all the way out to the plant. I followed this route myself when I went to investigate. It would have been a perfect route. Public relations with the people concerned would have been excellent. The farmers would have been glad to be of service and to allow their land to be expropriated. They would probably have given it to the company if they had had an opportunity. However, the land agent did not go to see them until May 10 after the surveyors had been out on the land for eight whole days.

• (5:20 p.m.)

On receipt of the first letter I did not realize that the work would be started so quickly. I guess I was not given enough information. On July 18 I received a telephone call from the same Mr. Keith at the Fort Saskatchewan settlement. He told me that most of the line had already been bulldozed, that the roadbed was being laid and they were also building a fill across the big coulee that has the Sturgeon river at the bottom. The Sturgeon river is not a very big river. It may be as wide as this chamber at this point which is just before it joins the Saskatchewan river.

The work involved a quarter of a mile of fill. They diverted the river while they laid three or four culverts side by side, each culvert being 16 feet in diameter and 406 feet long, made of quarter inch steel. The fill is 400 feet wide and at least a quarter of a mile long. God knows what it will all cost. I suppose we will never get a true accounting on something like that.

The farmers wrote to many people. They wrote to the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), to the then minister of transport and to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene). They

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also wrote, as did I, to the Board of Transport Commissioners but apparently, they did not have anything to do with the matter. However, the Minister of Agriculture replied in part as follows:

In any case I am given to understand that the C.N.R. is anxious to reach an amicable and reasonable settlement with all the land owners involved, as far as compensation is concerned.

How in the name of God, Mr. Speaker, can they ever hope after their actions to reach an amicable and reasonable settlement? I would not let them on my place if they were doing that to my farm. I would keep them off in the time-honoured western way with a shotgun and, believe me, I know how to use one. The minister's letter continued:

I believe that it would now be in your best interests to communicate direct with the railway officials to let them know how much your claim is and what it is based on. I gather that the C.N.R. will not restrict claims to the actual land expropriated.

They jolly well couldn't, Mr. Speaker. Just think of the crops that were destroyed. The minister's letter went on to say:

They are aware of other damages done to farm lands.

Then came this statement:

If there is a silver lining in these kind of clouds, perhaps it is in the new crossing of the Sturgeon river that the C.N.R. has had to provide. This should be beneficial to you and your neighbours.

Ye Gods. After I was informed of the situation on July 18 and after I had visited the farmers concerned on Sunday, August 13, I wrote to the Prime Minister on August 14 and informed him of the situation. I told him I could hardly believe that he had been informed of a situation like this, because surely to heaven a man in his position would never allow Canadians in this our centennial year to be treated like these people have been treated.

These people never had a chance to make a deal with the C.N.R. Their land has been confiscated. It reminds me of what could happen in Hitler's era, in the U.S.S.R. or in communist China at the present time. These people's rights were not honoured or respected. Their fences were cut without them being told. Their cattle were allowed to run out into their crops and destroy them. The C.N.R., or whoever the contractors for the spur line are, are going to have one gosh awful bill to settle.

As I have said, they could have built the railway along any one of four other routes. If they had it would not have been 12½ miles