

in parliament many times, no matter what government is in power action is delayed. I congratulate the hon. member for Peace River on bringing in this resolution once more, and I also congratulate those who supported the resolution last year. I do not know how many will support it this year. I hope it will be supported by a good many hon. members, and I hope that many hon. gentlemen to the right of the Speaker will lend their support also.

May I say also, Mr. Speaker, that I really do not think hon. members should be afraid to rise in their seats and support a resolution of this kind, because it has a direct connection with their own pledges which were given in 1930. All these pledges have been read to the house time and again, but there is no reason why they should not be brought up every day of every session until there is an election, because it only brings hon. gentlemen opposite face to face with what they said they would do or would honourably try to do not only for the Peace River country but for other parts of northern Canada as well. I find, Mr. Speaker, in the pledge presented to Canada in 1930 by the Conservative party, when they appealed to the country and won the day on the ballots cast in the election, the promise to improve the whole scheme of Canadian transportation northward by the completion of the Hudson Bay route, and the pledge to construct also such branches as might be necessary to render that route most readily available to every part of Canada. In that same pledge they promised to build a Peace River outlet to the coast.

So we have a pledge dealing with this Peace River outlet, with the Hudson Bay railway and with branch line development in northern Saskatchewan, in order to make those areas more productive and more settled. But no action was taken by the government following the debate last year; no action has been taken, despite its pledge and the statements that were made in the house a year ago when this resolution was being considered. It would appear that the main reason for this lack of action is the general railway situation in Canada. No doubt the government will repeat the statement that the railway situation is not hopeful, that the tonnage is not large, that the railways are going behind, and that trade is not heavy enough to warrant any future construction of rail facilities. We find the government taking cover behind this general statement of rail policy, with the result that during the past twelve months nothing has been done by way of rail extension.

May I submit, Mr. Speaker, that apart from the mineral, timber, water power and other resources of that huge area, we must not forget the human element, which is perhaps of the greatest importance. There are thousands of settlers in that area who have come from different parts of Canada, and of course if they lack rail facilities they lack any connection worth speaking of with the outside world. In my opinion the government ought to do something to alleviate the distress of those settlers, and that is why I have risen this afternoon to say a word in connection with this resolution, as I did last year. I was one of the thirty-nine who supported the resolution then introduced, and I am quite ready to support it again.

After all, the constituency of North Battleford which I represent in this house is in very much the same position as the Peace River district. I think perhaps the railway problem in this constituency, upon which I have touched time and again in this house, is just as acute as the problem of the Peace River outlet, if not more so. In 1930 hon. members opposite made the pledge that if their party came into power there would be railway development carried on in northern Saskatchewan, northern Manitoba and northern Alberta. The government have been in power for four years now, but there has been no railway construction undertaken and no branch lines built. As a consequence men and women who have trekked from southern Alberta, southern Saskatchewan and southern Manitoba into the upper part of northwestern Saskatchewan are to-day without adequate transportation facilities. They are in the north hewing out homes for themselves, keeping off relief, trying to raise families and to do their duty by the state, and looking for rail development which has not come. Personally I think if anything at all can be done to help these people, it ought to be done.

The problem in North Battleford riding is a part of the Peace River problem; there is no doubt about that. When I touched upon that problem in the house in my speech on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, I referred merely to a petition numbering 500 names, from the North Battleford constituency. The Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) was in his seat that day and apparently he thought I was going to read the 500 names. I had not any such intention; I wanted merely to read the preamble of the petition and to refer to its importance, when the Prime Minister rose and objected to a member reading a petition. It was not the kind of petition he thought it was; apparently he jumped to the