

*Peace River Outlet—Mr. Munn*

sidered as final. Personally I am glad to hear the hon. Minister of Railways say that he is not in accord with the last clause in which the engineers say that no western route is justified.

Mr. MANION: I think it is only a matter of when the work should be done. That is the only dispute.

Mr. REID: I am glad to hear the hon. minister so express himself. I simply rose, Mr. Speaker, to endorse the resolution.

Mr. A. E. MUNN (Vancouver North): Mr. Speaker, I also wish to support this resolution, so ably presented by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Kennedy). The dominion is under an obligation to the Peace River country, for, as has been pointed out, the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) when in power, definitely promised that within a reasonable time a start would be made to construct an outlet from the Peace River to the Pacific coast, and later, the present right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) made practically the same promise. During the special session in 1930 I pointed out that those promises had been made, and that the government could not spend money to better advantage than by completing the Pacific Great Eastern end in British Columbia. I think my advice was sound, although the government did not accept it. At the present time road-building camps are scattered all over British Columbia. Some of the roads under construction may be necessary, but undoubtedly others are not needed at all. As a matter of fact there is not much actual road-building going on, the men are simply living at the camps and doing very little work. If the government are going to carry on public works in British Columbia to relieve unemployment, I would advise that they reorganize the whole system and bend their energies towards completing the Pacific Great Eastern from Vancouver to the Canadian National railway. That work could be undertaken to provide unemployment relief, and it would be a considerable step towards opening up the Peace River country.

My hon. friend from New Westminster (Mr. Reid) took exception to the report. I will not even discuss it. I am somewhat familiar with the country, and in my opinion the mere mention of the Aggie-Obed route condemns the whole report. There are four possible routes, and anyone familiar with the country who hears the Obed route recommended would condemn the whole report as a matter of common sense.

[Mr. Reid.]

I am not going into the resources of the Peace River country; that question has been discussed for years. There are wonderful resources in that country, with millions of acres of the best wheat land in North America not taken up. We hope that in the near future this outlet will be supplied, but in the meantime I think this government, instead of spending relief money in the building of patches of road here and there, some of which may be needed but many of which are quite unnecessary, should spend the money in completing the Pacific Great Eastern railway, and in doing so they will go a long way towards opening up the Peace river area.

Mr. A. U. G. BURY (East Edmonton): Mr. Speaker, on previous occasions when this matter was brought up in the house by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Kennedy) I took no part in the debate, although I am very much interested in the matter. I think the last time I had occasion to refer to the Peace River question was during the session of 1926, but I should not like this debate to pass without saying something with regard to this matter.

We have been referred to the reports of the railway engineers with regard to the relative merits of the different routes. I have no intention of going into those reports or the arguments based upon them; I suppose the route will be settled, broadly speaking, on two considerations: first, the engineering features and secondly—and I think this is the main point to be considered—the amount and richness of the territory which will be served.

As far as the city of Edmonton is concerned, in my opinion and in the opinion of a great many people in that city, the construction of a Peace River outlet will bring us no immediate advantage; rather it will work to our disadvantage. At present that great country is really a sort of cul-de-sac; anyone entering it must go through Edmonton, and anyone leaving it must come out the same way. All traffic to and from that district, whether passenger or freight, passes through my city. But while we recognize that the immediate result of a Peace River outlet may not be particularly advantageous to our city, at the same time we all recognize that the development of the Peace River country ultimately will be of advantage to the city; we recognize that we cannot introduce a policy which will have a beneficial effect in the development of one part of the province of Alberta without every other part of the province reaping resultant benefits. Therefore, with no immediately selfish motive, I rise to support the plea of the hon. member for Peace River.