

should certainly not allow them to meet others who are departing in a discouraged frame of mind. Therefore, not only are branch lines necessary to develop the country and provide reasonable facilities for the immigrant, but also to retain that part of our population which has so courageously planted itself on the land.

It is not likely that the Canadian National Railways will suffer materially from a financial view, for three or four or perhaps five years if the branch line programme herein contemplated is abandoned, but it is inevitable, that should such a thing come about, at the expiration of a period of years the system will find itself robbed of all further opportunity for reasonable development. Strategic territories will have been seized by other transportation interests, and the railway will dry up at its roots. I can think of no more effective way to eventually bring about the ruin of the Canadian National Railway system than a refusal to embark upon and consistently maintain a branch line programme. No railway can stand still, and success can only be achieved by keeping abreast of the times in the fulfilment of transportation responsibility. This is even more important in a growing and rapidly developing country.

I particularly desire to make it clear that the recommendations herein contained are based not only on present day conditions but also have regard for the probable volume of traffic which would result from the settlement of the country in years to come.

I therefore endorse the programme which has been submitted to you as representing, after full consideration of all facts and factors, that minimum which is essential to the needs of the communities served by the Canadian National Railways, and the system itself.

Yours faithfully,

H. W. THORNTON,

President.

There is a note at the bottom in reference to the "Grande Fresniere Mile 0-12," which intimates that an arrangement may possibly be made with the Canadian Pacific Railway which would obviate the necessity of building this line.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Which line is that?

Mr. GRAHAM: The Huberdeau branch. That is in Quebec. If this arrangement is effected, this construction would not be necessary.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Before reading the letter of Sir Henry Thornton describing the situation, the minister read a statement dealing with this particular line. Is that a statement of Sir Henry Thornton?

Mr. GRAHAM: This is the statement prepared by the officials of the Canadian National Railway, and in this letter the statements accompanying each bill are endorsed by the president.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: So that is the statement referred to by the president in his letter?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Will the minister let us know which way this grade is? Is it

[Mr. Graham.]

in connection with the traffic north or the traffic south?

Mr. GRAHAM: I imagine that it is the traffic south to a large extent. The advantage of this proposal is that it will give a five-tenths grade in each direction.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: If this grade is with the bulk of the traffic and not against it, it will make a difference. I would like to know the fact in regard to that.

Mr. GRAHAM: The grade is against the bulk of the traffic, as I understand it.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Then that grade is a lifting grade in the southerly movement?

Mr. GRAHAM: I imagine there is a grade both ways probably. The memorandum says—

"And will avoid a rise of 200 feet in each direction."

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I understand. Will the minister give the House the particulars as to the movement?

Mr. GRAHAM: I have not them.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I think we should have the weight of movement, so that we can see what will result from this arrangement. We should have the class of traffic and the direction in which it moves. Then we should also get the information as to other grades upon the same line, when they occur and what the grade is, for example, on the movement from Chicoutimi to the point of intersection. We should have the same information from the western terminus of the branch, and also the grade from Chicoutimi south. It may be that this is merely a minor grade connection, and we are committing ourselves to a whole lot of other expenditures in order to reduce this line to a grade of five-eighths.

Mr. GRAHAM: I think I read in this statement—I do not see it at the moment—that if we reduce the grades we could look forward to large increased tonnage per train.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Then we should have the full information.

Mr. GRAHAM: Well, this is all the grade that it will be necessary to remove by this expenditure. I have not the information my hon. friend wants, but I could get it for him when we are in committee on the bill. I can get all the engineering information.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: The hon. minister will see the necessity of having the information.