

From the figures in their report it appears that when traffic amounts to 1,080,000 tons it will be economical to build the Aggie-Obed outlet. That was the report of 1925. The British Columbia report of 1929-30 I have not seen, so I shall not discuss it. The 1931 report which was made by the engineers of the Canadian Pacific Railway at a cost to the railway of something like \$250,000, favoured the Peace pass outlet. There is no harm in my making that statement, since it is referred to in the report now under discussion. I did not make that statement last year, though I had that knowledge at the time, because I had not the permission of the railway to disclose any of the details, but since that statement has been made in the report now before the house I see no harm in repeating it.

Then we have the report which is really under discussion at the moment, in which nothing new is brought out. The report contains a letter which I sent to the engineers, because they wanted some instructions. While I gave them instructions in a general way, I stated that we hoped they would not have to go to any great expense, though we did not strictly limit them, and had they so chosen they could have asked for money with which to carry on any investigation they desired. However, we were not asked for any further appropriation of any kind for that purpose.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): Does the minister know if the engineers went to the Peace River area last year?

Mr. MANION: I am sorry I cannot say, but all three engineers have been there a good deal. As my hon. friend knows, Mr. Gzowski, Mr. Fairbairn and Mr. Crysdale have all made reports of their own on the same question, and they have investigated, probably as far as anyone in Canada has investigated, the possibilities of that area. I will not read the whole report, though it is rather brief, but I wish to read the concluding paragraphs because they sum up the whole matter:

At the time the 1925 report was made, local interests were mainly concerned in obtaining a western outlet to cheapen their freight cost to the Pacific, and supply further railway mileage in the district. Since that time, a reduction of freight rates has been accorded them, now substantially equalling rates which would obtain if a western outlet were in use; and also since that time, about 130 miles of new branch lines have been put into operation. Thus, if not all, have the main requirements of the local interest been met. As the development of the district is from time to time pushed beyond reasonable road haulage distance from the existing lines of railways, local interest will demand further railway mileage. In our opinion this can be,

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as and when necessary, readily met by further branch line construction.

In view of the above, our conclusions are:

1. No western outlet is justified for the present, as the existing railway furnishes the most economical route. It will take many times the present traffic to justify another railway outlet.

2. The Obed route for a western outlet is the most favourable from a railway economic standpoint, considering the present phase of the railway situation.

3. We recommend that the matter of a final route be decided when the question is a practical one, believing that by the time the volume of traffic has reached a point where a western outlet is justified, general and possible local conditions may have materially changed. When the decision is imperative, the whole situation should be reviewed, in order to appraise all the contributing factors, including the potential traffic which may accrue from the lands beyond the definite areas included in this report.

This is signed by the three engineers, Mr. J. M. R. Fairbairn, chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway; C. S. Gzowski, chief engineer of construction of the Canadian National Railways, and C. R. Crysdale, consulting engineer. I mention the personnel of the commission because there has been some question raised—not by my hon. friend who has just taken his seat, but by others—as to the suitability of these gentlemen. It seemed to me to be eminently fair to choose the chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the chief engineer of the Canadian National Railways both of whom had been dealing with this matter. The third appointee was Mr. Crysdale who was known to the people of British Columbia. No objection was made to this appointment, and in fact I can go further and say that this choice was approved.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): By the government of British Columbia?

Mr. MANION: I do not know that I wish at the moment to state that positively, but I can assure my hon. friend that no objection was raised by the government of British Columbia. I have had some correspondence of a private nature with the government but I doubt if I have the right to put it on Hansard. There was no opposition and I do not know, and I am sure my hon. friend does not know, of any reason why there should have been opposition. Only a short time before, if I remember rightly, Mr. Crysdale was asked by the government of British Columbia to make a thorough investigation of the lands surrounding the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, and apparently that report was considered to be satisfactory. I think my hon. friend will agree with me that Mr. Crysdale was an eminently suitable choice.