

expenditure. I want the route settled and sufficient of it built in the near future to meet the needs of the present settlers with completion of it as soon as possible; but it is necessary that sufficient be built to meet the requirements of the actual settlement areas where people have come from the rest of the prairie provinces where they have been dried out or hauled out, and are anxious to establish themselves in new homes and to keep themselves from being relief charges on the Dominion of Canada.

Hon. R. J. MANION (Minister of Railways): Mr. Speaker, in replying to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Kennedy) I shall not take up much of the time of the house, although I assure him it is not my desire to give him a short answer. I should like very heartily to congratulate him on his activity in this regard. I have been in this house for a number of years and, indeed, for some years before he became a member, but since he has been in the house he has been persistent and consistent in his advocacy of the building of this railway. He deserves great credit for the active way in which he has worked for his great section of country, a new empire in the far northwest, and I say in all sincerity that I trust he will be long enough in the house to see his ambitions in that regard fulfilled.

Mr. HANBURY: Perhaps his own government can have that done.

Mr. MANION: That is quite possible, although I am afraid if he waits that long he will be a centenarian. I hope some day, possibly in the years to come, this government may be able to have this railway built, but at the present time, owing to the financial situation not only of the dominion but of the railways, this is not at all likely during the present year.

Last year, speaking on this question in reply to my hon. friend, I reviewed the situation pretty thoroughly, so that it is not necessary to go into it in detail to-day. I shall, however, just read the report which I put on Hansard of the three engineers who made the most recent investigation into the whole project. Their opinion is explicit; it is that of the Canadian Pacific engineer, the Canadian National engineer, and the third engineer who was appointed, I think, as chairman, so that it is authoritative. The three engineers were 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, consult-

ing engineer of British Columbia, a man who apparently was acceptable to all parties to the question at the time. The final summing up of their report is as follows:

In view of the above—

They had reviewed the whole situation.

—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 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.

These are the final conclusions of the three engineers who made the investigation, late in 1931, and whose report was submitted to us and to the house early last year. May I add that Mr. Beatty and Sir Henry Thornton at the time endorsed the report as it was submitted to the government and to the house.

As to my hon. friend's suggestion that it might have been better to build the Peace River outlet than some of the hotels and other unnecessary structures that were undertaken in connection with the railways, I would entirely agree with him. The total amount of money that was spent unnecessarily on duplication of hotels, the purchase of lines that were losers from the beginning, and the building of unnecessary steamships and the like, probably would easily have built the Peace River railway outlet which would at least have been no greater a loser than have been these unnecessary capital expenditures for the railways. That, however, is water that has flowed under the bridge and we cannot change the situation. Therefore with both railways at the present time earning about half the amount they did during the peak year, it is obvious that they will not change their minds in regard to the report which their engineers and Mr. Crysdale submitted last year. The best I can say to my hon. friend—and I say it in all sincerity—is that the day may come in the near future when world and Canadian conditions will so improve that this matter may be given consideration. I am afraid that I cannot go even to the formal extent of promising consideration at the present moment of any proposal