

of money. In view of the fact that the Government have other items in these Estimates which are certainly of no more importance than the Hudson Bay railway that is rather surprising. Money can be found readily for other enterprises. I might mention the Trent canal, Welland ship canal, and other undertakings. It would seem that the Government can readily provide money for those works which they particularly desire to carry out. The question of obtaining labour is not a consideration. Last year I heard the Minister of Railways speaking about further work on the Welland canal, and he said it was absolutely necessary to go on with it in order to provide labour for the men who otherwise would not be employed. At the same time he said that the Hudson Bay railway could not be proceeded with because labour could not be obtained. I wish to point out that as far as the laying of steel is concerned—and that is the main item which is necessary under present conditions—not much labour is involved. The steel gang does not number more than from 60 to 100 men, and these can readily be obtained up in that northern country.

I now wish to read a short extract from the Winnipeg Free Press with reference to the opposition to the Hudson Bay railway which appears in the East. I can tell the minister that there has been aroused in the minds of the people of the West a strong suspicion that, notwithstanding the announcement of the Government that the road is to be completed, the unnecessary and persistent delays that are taking place and the obstacles that are being placed in the way of its completion, have caused the suspicion that there is some underground influence at work down here to prevent this project from being finished. The Free Press, which speaks authoritatively for the West, has this to say in a recent editorial:

**Fighting the Hudson Bay Route.**

The people of the West would no doubt accept more philosophically than they do the failure of the Dominion Government to go ahead with the work of completing the Hudson Bay railway if they were assured that behind the refusal there was nothing more than the stated economic reasons which are of undoubted force. If they are suspicious as to these being the only, or perhaps the controlling reasons, they can find their justification in the inveterate hostility to the whole Hudson Bay enterprise which is entertained by powerful interests in the East which is periodically revealed.

**Further on the article says:**

The opposition of Montreal and other eastern interests to the Hudson Bay road arises in reality from the fear that if the northern route

is opened up it will justify the expectations of its promoters and thus deflect traffic through the Bay and Straits which would otherwise pass through Montreal, enabling that Imperial city to levy a toll upon it. The motive of the opposition is not regard for national economy half as much as it is downright narrow-minded selfishness. Selfishness of a particular stupid kind, too; for there is no justification for this fear which oppresses them. If the Hudson Bay route were found to be a success beyond the wildest dreams of its supporters, Montreal, as the commercial capital of Canada, would share in generous measure in the resulting prosperity of Western Canada.

I might just state here in conclusion what does not appear to be generally known, that the West is actually paying for the construction of this road. Some years ago certain lands were set aside to be sold, the proceeds to be used in the construction of the Hudson Bay railway. Already \$30,000,000 worth of these lands have been sold and more than \$15,000,000 of money has been collected. Therefore all the money needed for the work is either on hand, or will be readily available. The Hudson Bay railway is to the people of the West what the Intercolonial railway is to the people of the Maritime Provinces, and what the Canadian Pacific railway is to the people of British Columbia. Unfortunately, the western provinces did not have any guarantee, contract or bond that this road would be built, such as the Maritime Provinces and British Columbia had when they entered Confederation.

There is taking place in the East a change of sentiment with respect to this railway. The reasons that were given in the first place for the construction of the line still exist. The West is one thousand miles nearer the seaboard by this route than by the St. Lawrence or any other route. The same conditions exist now that existed when this was given as the only reason for building the road. But since that time other reasons have developed. The situation is similar in the West to that in connection with the construction of the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario railway. This road was conceived and constructed for the purpose of serving a great clay belt in the north part of Ontario. Shortly after construction was started the original idea of the project was almost entirely lost sight of because of the fact that mineral discoveries of immense importance were made in that district. A similar situation exists in Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. While the original object of the construction of the Hudson Bay railway, that of establishing a convenient overseas route, is still very im-