

are saving lives. As years pass, the memory of the generous humane act increases rather than fades. Offspring grow up and the family circle will never forget the generous act of the government.

Let us not worry about the inconvenience to these people; they are asking for it. They are not concerned with housing shortages. They only know the human problems involved and they seek permission to do everything they can to help.

If we do what I suggest, people will appreciate that we are seized with the urgency of the present problem, and it is an urgent one, as I have indicated. When Canada was refused permission to go before the "Big Four" powers the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) talked of the drying up of the wells of chivalry. Let us not dry up the wells of compassion. Every human instinct within us cries out for these people. Today the narrow gates of Canada are almost as hard to pass through as St. Peter's gates, and to the homeless of Europe they are the pearly gates on earth.

Mr. R. R. KNIGHT (Saskatoon City): In speaking in this debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne I wish to bring before the house a subject of great importance to my home city of Saskatoon, to the province of Saskatchewan and to the nation of Canada. I had expected that we might have an opportunity to have a full debate on this subject, but the likelihood of that is now small. The subject to which I refer is the use of the port of Churchill and the Hudson bay railroad, and I propose to make of it, if a colourless, at least a cautious and a careful analysis.

On October 15, 1945, this subject was debated in the house on a motion moved by my colleague, the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Moore), who had asked for the encouragement by this government of the fullest use of the harbour facilities and the railroad. The house divided on the motion and hon. members will remember that it carried by a vote of 105 to 24. It would appear that the people of this country, as represented in this House of Commons, favour the idea of giving this route an opportunity to prove itself, something which up to the present it has not had. Proof of its feasibility can be furnished only by its use at full capacity over a period, and I hope that the few remarks which I shall now make will carry in them the impact of that single idea, for I shall not attempt to foresee in prospect the possibilities of the route. That might be interpreted as wishful thinking. Nor shall I attempt to give its history,

[Mr. Croll.]

interesting and romantic as that may be; for that can be obtained from the record of the 1945 debates, as can the statistical record of its operation. I shall endeavour to restrain the exaggeration of enthusiasm, and try to show clearly and precisely why and how in this year of 1947 a proper test of the whole project may be made.

First, it is the wish of the people of this country that such a test be made. I have already spoken of the expression of that wish in this House of Commons by the representatives of the people. But what of the people themselves? Rightly or wrongly, many western people believe that this route has been deliberately sabotaged by some of those whose interests it contravenes. They have upon occasion expressed themselves strongly in that regard. This government should note that the farmers in the recent farm strike in the west had some opinions to express about the Hudson bay route.

I hold in my hand a booklet entitled "Farmers' Action Program of Alberta Farmers' Union and United Farmers' of Canada", and on page 6, which has to do with a discussion on freight rates, I read this:

An equitable adjustment must be made in the grossly unfair freight rate structure which discriminates in freight charges against prairie farmers exporting and importing goods on all lines of railway, including the Hudson Bay railway.

On page 15, under the heading "Hudson Bay—Churchill railway", we find a strongly worded plea for this route from this organization, with a recommendation that a committee of their number be empowered to carry out an investigation to discover if there is any valid reason why the route should not be used. There are out there many farmers who are interested in this question, and their tempers are becoming somewhat short and somewhat worn by reason of what they consider unwarrantable delays. Here is a resolution passed by the December 1946 convention of the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan section:

Therefore be it resolved that the dominion government forthwith appoint a royal commission of inquiry to investigate all matters pertaining to the operation of the Hudson Bay railway and the port at Churchill, and that a member of the Hudson Bay Route Association be appointed on the said commission.

So my first point has been to attempt to show that there is a demand for Churchill to have its chance. I shall adorn this part of my argument by quoting the words of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier) whom