

*The Budget—Mr. Fane*

● (5:10 p.m.)

When I criticize transportation in this country I do not wish to include Air Canada because they are doing a pretty wonderful job except for one thing. They do not operate enough aircraft in and out of Edmonton any more. They have given Edmonton the go-by. I hope that I cannot lay that entirely at the door of the former minister of transport, though he may have had a finger in that pie.

We have troubles with the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways which are deliberately destroying the services that they are supposed to provide for the people of Canada. Services are reduced and costs increase, as all other costs have.

Today I complain about a spur line being built from Fort Saskatchewan to a government subsidized Imperial Oil fertilizer plant six miles south of Redwater. The line is supposed to be in a designated area and is 12½ miles long. It has been possible to build this line because of clause 77 on page 66 of Bill No. C-231, which says that railway companies may build a spur line 20 miles long without coming to parliament. I believe they need an order in council only. Before this bill, six miles of line was the limit.

The Canadian National received permission to build this spur line which runs through the oldest settled area in Alberta. It runs through the finest farm land in Canada in what is now called the Fort Saskatchewan settlement. It used to be called the Lamoureux settlement. The original settlers there were called Lamoureux, the same name as Mr. Speaker. But they have been out there for so long that they are not called Lamoureux any more. The name is pronounced Lammory now. That is what they are called and that is the name of the settlement.

This settlement was started before the survey of western Canada. The lots are mainly river lots because the highway was the river then. The farms in Quebec too ran back from the river. But these farms are a little bigger than normal because in those days there was more room and there were fewer people in the west. Most river lots are about 300 acres each. There are quite a few of them and they extend for a matter of perhaps three or four miles. However, the railway got authority on April 27 to build a spur line there. On April 28 it wrote letters to all the farmers concerned, 23 in all, many of whom are descendants of people who settled on this land more than 100 years ago. This is not very long in the life of Ontario or Quebec but it is a long time in the life of what is now Alberta.

I said that this letter was written to these people by the Canadian National Railways land agent in Edmonton on April 28. On May 2 the surveyors were out, before most of these people had got their letters telling them that their land would be expropriated. "Expropriated" was the word used but the company did not expropriate the land; confiscated it. When a child of the government, a Crown corporation, can go into the oldest farming district in a province and drive a path right through the finest farming country in Canada we have indeed reached an unenviable point in our history. When I say that this is the finest farming land in Canada, I mean it. When other areas were faced with crop failure this year these people harvested between 60 and 65 bushels of wheat to the acre.

The railway company surveyed the land and decided to go right through the farms. They did not go around the edge of the concession, as it would be called in the east. It went right through at an angle, thus cutting the farms to pieces with the result that they are not worth a darn for farming any more. One man told me his farm has been cut into 14 separate pieces by this spur line. Remember, Mr. Speaker, there has been no real effort made by the C.N.R. to reach any settlement with these farmers. It is really a crime.

This is not the only route the railway could have taken. It could have linked up with the C.N.R. line five miles south of the plant that is being built. It could have gone six miles north into the town of Redwater where the C.N.R. runs. It could have gone eight miles straight west to meet the C.N.R. line at Gibbons. Yet it had to go through all these farms at an angle, thus destroying them. I have a plan here showing the alternative routes. It is available and it can be seen.

Everybody was happy when it was announced that the fertilizer plant was to be built six miles south of Redwater. But this plant also is built on two parcels of land comparable in value with the land which the railway has confiscated and is in the process of destroying. I should like to read a number of letters on this subject though I doubt that I will have time.

I was first informed of what was happening in a letter from a Mr. and Mrs. Keith written on May 17 and received by me on May 25. I at once wrote to the then minister of transport and one month later I received a reply from him, just a brush-off enclosing a letter