

Mr. ROSS (Kingston): How far is it from Kelowna to the station on the Crownest or the Kettle valley?

Mr. McBRIDE: It must be quite a distance. I do not know that line. It is not in the same district at all. There is a gypsum deposit on this line at Grand Prairie and the mill is built to manufacture this gypsum. That mill has been there for years, and will itself contribute a large amount of traffic to this line. I think I am safe in saying that there are at the present time about five cars of gypsum per day coming into Vancouver. That mostly comes from Winnipeg. If this line were built, that traffic would all be diverted to Grand Prairie as the freight would be much less. As has already been said, about \$5,500,000 has been spent on the line. The right of way is there and the ties are there: They are deteriorating as the years go by and I would be safe in saying that it would be one of the best paying branches of the Canadian National Railways west of the Rocky mountains. Last year there were over 6,000 cars of apples taken out of the Okanagan, besides other farm produce. If this line is built the Canadian National will have half of that, in fact they will have more than half of this freight, and the only men I have ever heard criticise this extension are gentlemen who are either employed by or working for the Canadian Pacific Railway—

Mr. MARLER: Is the hon. gentleman making any innuendo or slight suggestion in that respect? Let him speak out if he is.

Mr. McBRIDE: The hon. gentleman from St. Lawrence-St. George does not need to take it to himself if it does not fit him.

Mr. MacKELVIE: It is not necessary for me to say very much more than the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. McBride) has stated to the committee. I have spoken on several occasions regarding the necessity of this branch. Two or three weeks ago I dwelt on it to some extent in my remarks on the Speech from the Throne. My hon. friend from St. Lawrence-St. George takes exception to this statement and shows a very incomplete knowledge of the situation in that country. He bases his principal objection on the fact that on the Okanagan lake the Canadian Pacific runs a boat which provides transportation facilities for the fruit growers of that district. He does not take into consideration the contour of that country. He does not understand that between Vernon and Kelowna, a distance of thirty-five miles, there is a

[Mr. McBride.]

section which produces perhaps 60 per cent of the apples grown in that section. The fruit growers are subjected to a yearly charge of between \$300,000 and \$400,000 in truckage and drayage for the hauling of their fruit to points either on the lake or at the railway at Vernon. It was estimated in a board of trade brief which was prepared on this subject a few years ago that the total loss to the farmers of the district traversed by this line in hauling charges was not less than \$500,000 a year. This is a thickly populated district. It is a country of small farms, the average fruit farm consisting of ten or twenty acres. It takes upwards of fifty acres of prairie land to produce a car of grain, but this country will fill a car with produce from the orchards or with vegetables from an area of less than two acres, so that a very large traffic is to be expected from this district. Many of these orchards have not yet reached anything like maturity and in a few years their production will be doubled. Out of that valley last year went over 10,000 cars of freight; I do not know what the incoming freight represented. But a very large revenue indeed may be expected for the national lines when this great feeder is built.

Mr. MARLER: If this would be obviously such a paying line why was it not built in there long before this?

Mr. MacKELVIE: That is a question the hon. member will have to ask the government. The line has been graded for several years and undoubtedly would have been completed had not the war intervened. It was always regarded by the Canadian National authorities as a paying proposition. I venture to say that Sir Henry Thornton is as anxious as any member of this House to see it completed, and completed at an early day so that the Canadian National may, if possible, get a share of the outgoing traffic this year. The report read by the minister mentions the hilly nature of the country, but that refers only to a very small portion of it, lying between Ducks and Grand Prairie. The Grand Prairie district is a country where mixed farming has been carried on successfully for many years, and once transportation facilities are afforded it will double or treble its output. The gypsum deposit referred to by the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. McBride) is acknowledged to be the largest and purest deposit of the kind on the continent. It is in the possession to-day of a Winnipeg company who are only too