

been graded, and upon which money has been spent, but will not agree at present to sanction the construction of new roads.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Will the honourable gentlemen permit me? Suppose I move when we go into Committee that, for instance, item No. 17 in the schedule be struck out, where am I? The Speaker may rule that the Senate is not competent to strike it out.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Why?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Of course I cannot control the decisions of the Chair. Perhaps my honourable friend, if he looked in the Debates and Minutes of this House, would find that His Honour the Speaker is somewhat bound by a vote that he gave on this question.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: We shall have to be content to wait.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: We shall have to wait. But I wonder if we have a right under the present circumstances to say that this Bill shall be given the six-months hoist. It may be important to proceed this summer with the construction on some of those branches.

As I have stated, I am not personally familiar with the conditions prevailing in provinces other than the one in which I live; but I have appealed to my honourable colleagues in this Chamber to give us the benefit of their experience and judgment as to the value of the branches which it is sought to develop in their own provinces. That does not mean that the majority in this House will readily and blindly accept the opinion of one of their colleagues, who may be more interested in a branch near his home than in branches farther away, but it would be useful to have information from honourable gentlemen representing the various provinces.

Therefore I ask my honourable friend who has moved the six-months hoist to reconsider the desirability of allowing this Bill to go to Committee of the Whole, so that we may examine into the merits of the proposition before us.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: Surely the honourable leader of the Government can give us a straight answer. This is a very important point. Can we, if this Bill goes into Committee of the Whole, strike out one line of railway and adopt another, or can we strike out several lines and adopt others? That is the question that was put to the honourable gentleman. It is, I think, a simple one, and the honourable leader of the Government should give us a straight answer.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: According to my view, the answer is in the affirmative.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: No one in this House can give that assurance.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: The accompanying summarized statement gives each line on which any work is proposed during the three years. The lines are numbered from 1 to 30. The statement shows the amount of grading now completed ahead of the track-laying and the amount of grade and track work, in miles, to be done each year, and the estimated expenditure to be made on each line during the three years. It also shows the present position or mileage of the grade and the track, and to where it is proposed they will be extended by the end of the year 1925, and gives the amount of grade which will be without track by December 31, 1926, if the programme is completed.

Another statement shows for each year what mileage of grading, tracklaying and ballasting is proposed for each line and the estimated cost of the same. These are totalled for Eastern lines, Prairie lines and British Columbia, as well as for the year.

A further statement gives the grade now without track on each Branch line, divided into Active and Inactive lines. Inactive lines have been treated as remaining such for some time. The 372 miles of grade ahead of track on Active lines has been set up in the second statement as the grade ahead of track at end of year 1922. The reduction of this year is shown by the mileage of grade ahead of track being given at the end of the years 1923, 1924 and 1925.

The estimates of cost are based on using relay rails.

A brief statement on each line is appended, giving some facts pertaining to the work and the country through which it runs; also the justification for constructing it.

The programme for the year 1923 is quite large to accomplish in one season, particularly the part on the Prairies which covers 238 miles of tracklaying and 260 miles of ballasting. Not that the amount of work would be much to accomplish if in large stretches, but as it consists of ten places to lay track and 11 places to ballast, the preparations incidental to getting work going will consume considerable time. The effective season for doing work on the Prairies is very short. The climatic conditions limit it at the beginning and the labour situation when the grain harvest starts practically terminates it.

The programme, then, as set out for each year would be the aim, but would be subject to labour and seasonal conditions of weather.

I have here a statement showing the "three-year construction programme of new lines,