

*Supply—Hudson Bay Railway*

have in a very short time from Russia, the shortest and cheapest route we can get for our grain will be necessary if we are going to continue in the grain business.

This route, if it is feasible—and I believe it is—will also mean better trade with Great Britain. I know the majority of the people of western Canada believe it is. Another factor that affects this question is this: Frequently it has been pointed out in this House that the water on the Great lakes is going down. Perhaps every member does not realize exactly what that means. I am speaking only from memory, but I am quite positive that my memory is not playing me any tricks when I say that a large grain boat which is pretty well loaded would require eighty tons of freight to sink it another inch, or 2,960 tons to sink it one foot. That figures out to about 33,000 bushels. Hon. members will see where we are drifting. We hope that in a very short time we shall be able to stop the diversion of water at Chicago and in some way raise the water in the Great lakes to its former level. But if we are not able to do that, hon. members can see that the expense of transporting grain and other freight over the lake route is going to increase rapidly. What does it mean to have a large boat going down the lakes not filled but within a foot and a half of being filled? It means, if it is only a foot, 33,000 bushels short, and if it is a foot and a half, 49,500 bushels short. Therefore every foot lost in the depth of these lakes is an enormous loss. The situation is serious enough at the present. If it should become more serious and expensive the greater will be the necessity of opening up a new route via the Hudson bay. There are many other points that I could touch on; some of them have been touched on and some not, but at this late hour I am not going to prolong the discussion any longer.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: As one of the Winnipeg representatives I feel that I cannot give a silent vote on a question which has created so much discussion throughout western Canada. Some arguments which have been used do not particularly appeal to me. We are told that this legislation must be given simply to satisfy the west. I do not think that argument is good. The government should not yield to the clamour either of Oshawa or of Winnipeg. We are told that the question is not debatable. I do not think that position is tenable. We are told that the cost of construction is already provided for by the sale of western lands. I do not think that in itself is sufficient to warrant this

[Mr. Millar.]

estimate being passed. We are told that this is not a new project. I am inclined to think that argument has a considerable amount of weight, as we have already spent a great deal of money on the project and this expenditure would be lost if we did not go at least so far as the vote goes—that is to rehabilitate the road. I would point out incidentally that it is only on such an argument as this that we can justify continued expenditures on the Welland canal, more especially at this time and before the St. Lawrence waterway is deepened. Those who are afraid of the Hudson Bay railway ought to remember the Welland canal with its enormous expenditure; and it is a question whether or not it will be wise for us to complete that undertaking until we have finished the waterways lower down.

I have noticed that the advocates of the Hudson Bay railway are sometimes very resourceful and shift their ground as the necessity demands. If it is not a grain route, then it is a cattle route, and if it is not a cattle route then there is fishing or there are minerals to be developed.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Does not the hon. member say the same of the opponents of the railway?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Quite so. I say that we ought frankly to face all the facts of the case. This railroad, even though completed to tidewater, would be of comparatively little advantage without the terminals, and these terminals would be expensive. The question is undoubtedly of importance as to the choice between Churchill and Nelson as terminus. It is all very well for the advocates of the railroad to say that this question has been settled and that we cannot alter it. I do not believe that is so. It is no use suggesting that a discussion of the preference as between Churchill and Nelson is something in the nature of a red herring. Certainly we ought not to allow anything to divert us from the project if it is sound, but surely it is not too late to consider whether or not it is advisable to change the terminus.

For me, however, I confess, the most important consideration is the feasibility of the straits.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Will the hon. gentleman give us his reasons for thinking that the question as to which port should be chosen should be gone into again?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I think it should be considered on general principle. We have the most diverse statements with regard to the two ports, and it is not too late to make