

much to ask members of the government to tell us where they stand.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance): I very much regret that engagements elsewhere prevented my having the pleasure of being present this afternoon, and consequently I have not heard the debate. I have no doubt it was very instructive and interesting. But with very much that the right hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meighen) has said I cordially agree. I think it is too late to discuss the merits of the scheme. I am not so enthusiastic in my belief as to its value as a grain carrying route as some others, but this matter has been threshed out in years gone by, and rightly or wrongly this House, under various governments, has consented to the building of the Hudson Bay railway and the government of which I was a member began the construction of the railway. I think if one looks at the map of western Canada it is not difficult to find a reason why the western country should seek an outlet to the nearest and most attractive tidewater. If I lived in the West I should feel that we should have access to that route. Both parties have accepted the responsibility of it, and have done something in the way of building it, and both parties should see to it that it is one of the things we must undertake and in a reasonable time complete. I would hesitate to vote against it, because there is the danger that if one should vote against the resolution it would seem to imply a denial of the commitment of the past. I do not wish to be put in that position. In the resolution a clause has been inserted about priority over other projects. I am not sure what are the other engagements over which this is to have priority, but there are really commitments all over the Dominion, and it is the duty of the government to consider them all. I am anxious that the Hudson Bay railway should be undertaken but my right hon. friend (Mr. Meighen) made some reservation, and I should like to make a reservation. We must have some regard to the financial condition of the country, and I ask the House to keep that reservation in mind. I am going to support the resolution, because to vote against it would seem to me to be an indication that we were denying responsibility for the Hudson Bay railway. I do not want to deny it. I want to accept it, and the only reservation I make is that which applies to all large enterprises in Canada, namely that you must have regard to the financial situation of the country.

Mr. O. R. GOULD (Assiniboia): Since the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) has

made a few remarks, I feel much better than I did before. I was about to rise to remark that there would not be very many people in the West who would throw their hats in the air when they read the remarks of the Acting Minister of Railways (Mr. Graham). Hon. members representing the northern part of the western provinces have addressed the House and laid the facts well before the House; in fact there has been considerable repetition, but I do not rise for the purpose of repeating any facts which have been presented to show the feasibility of the route. I firmly believe in it. It has been a part of my teaching in the West. I believe in it and see the need of it. But speaking as one who comes from near the international boundary, I might state that we in the West know no party politics. Politics have no connection with the question; neither is it Progressive, Conservative, or Liberal. Each and all believe in the feasibility and propriety of the route. I have before me a resolution passed by the Estevan Board of Trade, that being the largest commercial centre in the electoral district of Assiniboia. I wish to read a few notes from a letter from the secretary of the Board of Trade, which accompanied the resolution. He says:

We feel strongly that this is a matter that should have the hearty support of every western member, and trust that some action may be taken by the government to ensure the completion of this project at an early date.

That is a sentiment we have had in common for a long time. I believe in the immediate completion of that road. I believe in the immediate completion of the facilities whereby at least a real good test of that route may be had. Further than that I am not going to ask the government to commit themselves to-night, but it seems to me that the 118 miles that it is proposed by the Acting Minister of Railways to have repaired does not go far enough to satisfy the needs of the country or the wishes of the people there, or to fulfil the promises that have been given to the people in the past. Now, I must protest to-night that it is not a fair thing to the people in that western country. They have a right to expect and do expect more, and I do hope the government may see in their wisdom ways and means whereby they can make provision for the road to Port Nelson this year. As I said before the ground has been well covered, and no arguments, I think, have been adduced to counter those which have been advanced in favour of the project.

Mr. ANDREW KNOX (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to delay the