

*Supply—Hudson Bay Railway*

tracks on a railway on which the minister proposes to spend \$3,000,000 in order to bring the main line of the railway itself up to the standard of a branch line. We have 27.8 miles of main line passing tracks capable of taking care of main line traffic such as we have been discussing this evening. Surely the minister is not going to take that position.

Mr. DUNNING: It is almost an insult to the intelligence of the committee, but it is necessary for me to explain that what was a main line standard when the road was originally constructed in 1913 or 1914 is not a main line standard to-day.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Exactly.

Mr. DUNNING: But as regards the length of the siding, the grading work, the steel work, it is all there, and we are able to ascertain what it would cost to put that particular piece of track and siding into a condition equivalent to present branch line standards. Surely that is plain enough to members of the committee. How much does my hon. friend's expert allow for new rails?

Mr. NICHOLSON: To put the present line into operating condition?

Mr. DUNNING: Yes.

Mr. NICHOLSON: \$921,000.

Mr. DUNNING: The present line is being operated to mile 214. My hon. friend's expert surely would not claim that there had been enough traffic over those eighty pound rails since that railway was constructed to wear them out.

Mr. CAHAN: There has been enough frost to put them out of shape.

Mr. DUNNING: If trains are operating over them they are not in bad enough condition to require a great deal of renewal. The only provision made in my estimate for new rails is in connection with the last 100 miles, the calculation being based upon the experience we had with the other 214 miles. It is believed that 950 tons costing \$39,000 will be sufficient. My hon. friend's figure is \$900,000.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I am sorry I cannot stay to continue this debate with my genial friend; but I have to leave to catch a train. I want to add just one word more to what I have said. The minister has spoken all along to-night in reference to branch line construction. I am referring to what will be necessary to make the main line construction of this railway capable of carrying a traffic such as, for example, 200 cars of wheat

[Mr. Nicholson.]

per day, with the class of rolling stock used at the present time in handling that amount of freight. The minister knows as well as I do the nature of the sidetracks. Let him read the chief engineer's report wherein it is stated that the rails have become so kinked and bent, as they obviously must have done under the conditions to which they have been exposed, as to make it imperative to replace them. Anyone who knows anything about the operations of a standard railway under the strain of modern traffic must realize that every single rail on the whole of that line will have to be replaced before you can make a main line railway of it.

Mr. DUNNING: I do not know who my hon. friend's expert is, but I have the estimate submitted by the engineers of the Canadian National system. That estimate contemplates the raising of the whole line to main line standard and it includes provision for three engine terminals at \$500,000 each, covering all the items the hon. gentleman mentions. The total estimate is \$4,373,000 to raise that 332 miles of main line to standard. My hon. friend's expert says it will take \$10,000,000. Now, the names of the engineers of the Canadian National Railways are well known to the public; they are not anonymous. And the chief engineer of the system stands behind the estimate I have quoted. I would rather take that estimate, as I feel sure the committee would, than an estimate of \$10,000,000 given anonymously by someone about whom this committee knows nothing.

Mr. NICHOLSON: So far as that goes, the minister knows perfectly well that a private member may secure information from an absolutely reliable source and be unable to disclose his authority. The person from whom he gets his information may be perfectly reliable but he dare not reveal his identity. I am prepared to stand by the figures I have put on Hansard. Is the minister equally ready to vouch for the figures he gave this afternoon and to-night in regard to the cost of terminals?

Mr. MACLEAN (York): I shall deal with this question from a new angle. I have heard arguments made by different hon. gentlemen, and it seems to me that the same views might be advanced for the next ten years without any results. Three governments have studied this problem, and with every change of administration there has been a change in the arguments in support of the Hudson Bay railway and against it. What this country wants in this matter is action, and action forthwith. We have been thirty