

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. What is the bonding power on the 1,300 miles that have been already constructed?

Mr. McCREARY. I am sorry that I cannot give the hon. gentleman the information he asks me for.

Hon. Mr. HAGGART. If they bond it for \$25,000 per mile and it is completed it would not affect the matter.

Mr. McCREARY. I suppose not. But the Manitoba government assumed responsibility for \$10,000 a mile on a portion and \$20,000 on another portion. I may not be correct in my contention, but I want to have it shown that I am not correct. I want to see that the Manitoba government will not have to guarantee interest on \$25,000 per mile instead of \$10,000. I want to see that the farmers of Manitoba who are supposed to get the benefit of that road will not have to pay interest on that extra bonding per mile. It is the duty of the Minister of Railways to clear up the point. He was thoroughly cognisant of the matter when it came before the Railway Committee and I have no doubt he will be able to explain.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS (Hon. A. G. Blair). The hon. member from Selkirk (Mr. McCreary) has invited my attention to some provisions of this Bill, and he particularly mentions the fact that it is proposed to construct an enormous mileage which he thinks we are not justified in empowering the company to construct. The hon. gentleman said that if this Bill passes the company will have authority to occupy not only the Yellow Head Pass but also the Pine River Pass under existing legislation. It will be remembered by members of the Railway Committee that two or three times I called the attention of the committee to the extended character of this proposed undertaking, and I mentioned that the company were asking to occupy a very great deal of territory. As far as my observations then impressed themselves on the committee the result was that considerable lengths of mileage which were embraced in the original Bill were stricken off, and it appeared to be the sense of the committee that the balance of the Bill should stand. I did not carry the controversy further; I do not propose to continue the controversy now. I called explicit attention to the very point which the hon. gentleman (Mr. McCreary) has dwelt upon, and the committee after listening to the arguments on both sides concluded that it was not improper legislation. Considerable respect is due to the decision of the committee with respect to all of these Bills, and unless the circumstances are of an extraordinary character, or unless something has been done under a misapprehension of the facts I think it is better to consider the decision of the committee as approaching finality. What my hon. friend (Mr. McCreary) has said with regard to the necessity of providing that running powers shall be secured to any

railway that may desire to use any of these passes, is covered by existing legislation completely. We would have added it to this Bill if it were necessary, but it is not necessary. The hon. gentleman seems to be under the impression that we have no information in the department as to the character of this Pine River Pass from a railway point of view. The hon. gentleman is not fully informed with respect to that, because my deputy tells me that the records of the department show that a very careful survey was made of the Pine River Pass, with the result that the opinion of the engineer, Sir Sanford Fleming was, that there was only room for one track through it. While that is the case, some one must build the track. It is quite immaterial it appears to me by what company the track is built, because there is ample power in the government under existing legislation to secure to any companies who desire to use the same pass, all the rights which they will need for such a purpose.

With reference to the effect of this legislation upon the contract entered into by the Manitoba government with the Canada Northern Railway; that point occurred to my mind before this question was disposed of in the committee, and I made such inquiries that I felt were necessary. I did not see how it would be possible for this legislation to enlarge or to restrict in any degree the contract as it affects the existing bonds which were already issued; and upon inquiry I was very well satisfied that my opinion in that regard was well founded. I think I can safely assure the hon. gentleman that he need have no anxiety on that account.

Mr. FRANK OLIVER (Alberta). I would like to say that while I would be only too glad to accept the assurances of the Minister of Railways on the subject of the responsibility likely to be laid upon the province of Manitoba by this legislation it is not altogether clear to my mind that the province is not placed at a disadvantage by it. I must admit my lack of legal training, and therefore that I am at a disadvantage in discussing this question. But it is an important question. We are going to do something that we cannot undo, and it is well that we should proceed with the fullest information, even to those of us who are not thoroughly versed in legal questions. The Manitoba government lies under its present responsibility in respect of the Canadian Northern Railway because of legislation by this parliament. That responsibility is limited to a certain amount. This parliament by legislation now in hand permits the adding of a certain load of responsibility, not on the province but on the company. This brings up the question as to whether the company, by reason of this legislation would not be at liberty to provide for the discharge of the interest upon the additional bonds before giving that advantage to the people of Manitoba which they