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GOVERNMENT LIKELY TO ASSIST PACIFIC GREAT EASTERN.

Hon. Lorne Campbell, Minister of Mines, the chairman of the sub-committee of the Executive Council, nominated by Premier Bowser to study the situation with a view to reporting the best means of securing the completion of those railway projects which are in progress as a result of Government aid, has already instituted inquiries, and hopes to be able to submit his findings to the executive prior to the session of the Legislature.

"The more important of the railway projects which thus come within the purview of this inquiry," says Mr. Campbell, "is that of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, which is now operating as far as Clinton, a distance of 180 miles from Squamish, the tidewater port on Howe Sound. All the remainder of the line to Prince George has been graded with the exception of thirty miles at Horse Lake in northern Cariboo. Virtually what still remains to be done to make a completed railway is to build bridges and lay steel from Clinton to the junction with the Grand Trunk Pacific at Prince George. Approximately \$22,500,000 has already been expended on the line, and the company, owing to its inability to market its bonds, is now out of construction funds. It has been estimated that it will take \$6,500,000 to finish the work and secure the completion of a real link of communication with the rich interior of the Province.

"The authorized extension of the Pacific Great Eastern into the Peace River country is on a slightly different basis from the portion of the line from Prince George to Squamish. The line was surveyed to the eastern boundary of British Columbia, but no market could be found for the securities, even though guaranteed by the Government. That part of the line is, therefore, untouched, and the situation precisely the same as if no contract had even been entered into. Construction work by the company is altogether contingent on the marketing of the bonds at reasonable figures.

"If the Government," said Mr. Campbell, "should at present desire to proceed with the Peace River connection it would have to implement its original guarantee by an interim loan, or otherwise assist the company with funds that would for the time being take the place of the proceeds expected from the sale of the bonds. Thus so long as conditions continue as they are, the rapidly growing traffic of the Peace River country will be diverted to Edmonton and the East instead of following the easier, shorter and more natural route to tidewater on the British Columbia coast."

Mr. Campbell further stated that the preliminary inquiries which had already been instituted by the committee showed that the Pacific Great Eastern Company had made every legitimate and bona fide effort to continue construction on the basis of the original understanding with the Government, and that the present financial difficulties were due entirely to the dislocation of the money markets of the world.

"Just what ways and means will be devised to place the company in a position to carry on, despite the war, is a matter," said Mr. Campbell, "which must be decided by the Government and the Legislature, and the report of the special committee, of which I am chairman, will be purely advisory."

Mr. Campbell made it clear that he personally had the conviction that a pressure of events, which could not have been foreseen when the undertaking was initiated, will compel the Government to exhaust every means to expedite the completion of the Pacific Great Eastern."