

## VANCOUVER-FORT GEORGE

With respect to the bill which it is my pleasant duty now to submit for its second reading, it is in effect an agreement entered into between His Majesty the King as represented in and by the Province of British Columbia, and Messrs. Foley, Welch & Stewart, a prominent firm of contractors, with an unchallengeable standing as legitimate railway builders, a standing that cannot be called into question. These gentlemen have been entrusted by the Government of the Dominion with a major portion of the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific line, and they have also carried to a successful conclusion contracts for the completion of large mileages for both the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern systems. We are, therefore, not dealing with any strange combination, but, on the other hand, with gentlemen of proven ability to carry out such works as they may undertake and such as is involved in the building of the Vancouver, Howe Sound & Fort George railway line. In connection with the urgent necessity for a railway connecting Vancouver with Fort George much has been said in the public press during recent weeks, and there has been marked activity among the various boards of trade, chambers of commerce and similar organizations which have energetically taken up this project. But when I take the House into my confidence and tell the House that the consideration of the best means to adopt to secure the building of this line has been the work of the Government during months and months past, it must not be taken as the slightest reflection upon the activity of these various organizations, but, rather, the Government recognizes these organizations as fittingly representative of the business interests of the country and of the optimistic feeling which is enjoyed throughout the length and breadth of British Columbia.

### NEARLY 5,000 MILES OF RAILWAY

In the first place, I should like to direct the attention of the House to the very striking evidence of the part played by late railway construction in the development of the Province. In 1904 there were, in British Columbia, but 1,650 miles of standard road. In 1912 the mileage, constructed or assured, and largely through the development of the railway policy of this Government, is not less than 2,435 miles—built or under contract. (Applause.) If we add to this the 845 miles in addition which are provided for by the policy of the Government embraced and expressed in these bills, we have the result of constructed and assured railways in British Columbia of about five thousand miles of standard road, as against but 1,650 a few years ago. Included in this approximate total I count this Vancouver and Fort George line with an estimated length of 450 miles.