

of this road and to make a sufficient expenditure on the harbour and docks at least to give the plan a fair trial, or to enable the experiment, as it has been called, to be made of shipping via that route. I am not one who would advise unlimited expenditure at this time on the harbour or on the railway; indeed, unlimited expenditure is not necessary on the railway, and I do not believe it is necessary on the harbour. A very small additional expenditure will make it possible to establish the value of that route as soon as suitable ships can be brought in to accept cargoes there.

I would like to say a few words with regard to the feasibility of the project. The ground was so well covered this afternoon that I shall cut out much of what I had in my notes on that phase of the subject, but there are just one or two points to which I wish to direct attention. The railroad is so nearly completed that it is not necessary to argue as to its feasibility. It is not so very many years since the question was raised in this House as to the practicability of building a railroad to Hudson bay. Nor is it much more than half a century since members of the Canadian parliament stated that it was not possible to lay steel across the continent in the construction of a transcontinental railway and make the undertaking a success. I ask you, then, to consider the arguments that are submitted as to the feasibility of this route.

As to the conditions in the bay, I am not a sea-going man; I am not a mariner, and consequently cannot make statements based on my own observations. I have never, I regret to say, visited the bay, but I have read reports made by men of long experience in those waters. I would like to quote from a report to which reference has already been made, that of J. A. J. McKenna, submitted to the Department of the Interior. One paragraph will suffice to sum up his opinion of the feasibility of the bay and straits route. It says:

In the course of a century and three-quarters, 750 vessels ranging from 70-ton ships to 10-ton pinnaces, crossed the ocean, passed through the straits, and sailed the bay in the service of the company.

That is, the Hudson's Bay Company.

Only two were lost—a marvellous record when it is remembered that all the craft were sailers and, most of them small and of rude construction, and that the bay and strait afforded them none of the modern accessories to navigation in the way of coast aids.

I had occasion, Sir, to speak to a resolution similar to this last year, and at that time I expressed the conviction that Port Nelson was perhaps, not the proper port for the terminal of this road. But in the year that has elapsed I have searched the available records much

further and I now believe that we make no mistake in urging that the road be built into Port Nelson. Should the time ever come when Port Nelson could not accommodate all the traffic that offered, there would still be the other port, which some hold to be a better natural port—Fort Churchill. The building of a few more miles of railroad would then make two ports available instead of one. But as the rails are now directed toward Port Nelson and a great deal of money has been expended there, I think the road should be built to that port as soon as possible. Port Nelson was chosen after great deliberation. In 1913, after a conference between Captain Bernier, Captain Bartlett—who has been mentioned as an authority in this matter—and the then Minister of Railways, the Hon. Frank Cochrane, Port Nelson was decided upon as the terminal. These gentlemen all had not only a theoretical knowledge of but practical experience in connection with the conditions there. The minister had visited the bay; the other two were sea-going captains who had had many years of Arctic experience. Port Nelson was regarded as the more desirable of the two ports, not only by reason of its more southerly location, but also because of its more favourable approaches from a navigation standpoint.

I have a few statements regarding Port Nelson which I would like to place before the House. A search of the records regarding the surveys of that port and the soundings made there shows that there is a deep water channel at least one-third of a mile wide up the middle of the estuary and separated from the shore by wide tidal flats over which the water is from one to three feet deep at low tide. The channel is 15 miles to deep water in the bay proper. The Hon. Mr. Hazen, then Minister of Marine and Fisheries, stated in answer to a question that without dredging at high water vessels drawing from 20 to 25 feet could safely go into Port Nelson. I will offer further testimony along that line in a moment. Later the Hon. Mr. Reid stated:

The channel is quite safe with a depth of never less than 19 feet and from one-half mile widening to 15 miles at the mouth, and there is a rise of 15 feet with the tide.

I call your attention, Sir, to the fact that these statements were made before any dredging had been done in the channel. It is further established, I believe, that with the exception of a few bars across the channel, a much greater depth of water is there naturally than the 19 feet mentioned, and that by dredging out these few bars—which are clay bars not sand bars—the channel can be made to