

*C.N.R.—Branch Lines*

The hon. member for West York, (Sir Henry Drayton) who was not then in the House but who since pretends to have learned a great deal about the political history of Nova Scotia, did not know what had happened.

Before I conclude I want to put on Hansard the letter from Colonel Cantley, so that hon. members may have the facts before them and so that the hon. member for West York will have some knowledge of the matter; for he shows a great lack of knowledge in connection with this railway. This proposal is entirely different from the others which were discussed to-day and the other day. The proposed road does not parallel any existing road. It does not interfere with the Canadian Pacific railway at all, because there is no Canadian Pacific railway in the county of Guysborough, nor any other railway. That county extending from the eastern part of Halifax county to the strait of Canso, about 150 miles long and from 20 to 75 miles in width, is without any railway except where the Canadian National touches the extreme northeastern end of the county at the strait of Canso. It is the second or third largest county in the province of Nova Scotia. The area of the county of Guysborough itself is something like 2,000 square miles. It has magnificent lumber areas. It has been estimated that there is between forty and fifty million dollars worth of lumber in Guysborough county to-day, which cannot be taken out on account of the lack of railway facilities, and on the Sunnybrae branch, between the county of Guysborough and the Intercolonial railway, in Pictou county, it is estimated that there is from four to five times that value in timber, which cannot be taken out without this road.

The fresh fish industry also cannot be developed unless there is quick transportation. Along that coast of 150 miles lies one of the greatest fishing grounds anywhere in the world, but it is entirely impossible to have a development of the fresh fish industry without quick transportation. To show you how this fish industry can be developed. In 1895 the federal government, and I think the provincial government of Nova Scotia, subsidized a small boat to run daily between Canso in the eastern end of Guysborough county, and Mulgrave, a distance of 27 miles. This daily steamer was put on for the purpose of testing what could be done in the shipment of fresh fish, and I will show you what the result has been. In 1895 the number of tons of fresh fish shipped was 790, and the expressage paid \$4,805; 1896, 900 tons, expressage paid, \$6,460. I will not give the

[Mr. McIsaac.]

figures for every year, but in 1905 the number of tons had increased to 2,201, and the expressage paid to \$23,000; in 1917, 11,831 tons of fresh fish were shipped from Canso alone, and the expressage paid was \$110,483. I have not the figures up to the present time, but I know that they show an increase year by year over the figures I have given and I am quite safe in saying that to-day at least 20,000 tons of fresh fish are shipped from Canso alone to the Intercolonial railway, and considering the increase in freight rates I am quite sure that the expressage paid would be over \$200,000. I am only citing that as an illustration of what might be done in developing the fresh fish trade of Guysborough county if we had a railway passing through it from Sunnybrae to Guysborough and later on to the strait of Canso. When that road is built it will shorten the distance between the prairie provinces by 75 to 100 miles; that is the short line from Oxford Junction down to Sunnybrae and Country Harbour would shorten the distance by at least 75 to 100 miles. As Sir Robert Borden said, and as is admitted by everybody, Guysborough has the finest and best harbour in the world, Country Harbour.

I am going to read a letter written by Colonel Thomas Cantley to the Montreal Gazette, appearing in its issue of March 12 last, and I will ask the House to bear with me patiently, because I do not take up much of its time. Colonel Cantley was the Conservative candidate for the county of Pictou at the last general election; he was also a member of the Hanna National Railway Board up to the time he resigned; so we can have no better authority on this question; I think he will satisfy even the hon. member for Toronto and any other doubting Thomas on the other side of the House. This letter was written after a survey had been made of this line, and after Colonel Cantley had travelled with the engineer over every foot of the proposed line from Sunnybrae to Guysborough and Mulgrave. He says:

A Needed Branch Line

To the Editor of The Gazette:

Sir,—In your issue of February 20th last is an article entitled "C.N.R. Branch Lines will be introduced."

With a portion of the article I have no particular concern, but when you there state that "the Guysboro road was especially condemned, having been rejected by every government for thirty years. It would cost \$7,000,000, and there would be an annual deficit of not less than \$500,000," I must protest. The statement that the construction of the road was rejected by every government for thirty years is in direct conflict with the facts.

If you will consult parliamentary history you will learn that the Laurier government in 1910-11 called for tenders for the construction of the Guysboro road, after which a contract for the construction of a con-