

Supply—Hudson Bay Railway

Mr. NICHOLSON: I am in the judgment of the committee as to that. The minister says that the navigability of the straits has been demonstrated for 200 years.

Mr. HAY: Yes, more.

Mr. NICHOLSON: So has the navigation of Coronation gulf been demonstrated in the same way; but would anyone suggest we should ship our wheat out through the Mackenzie river? The minister came to the point when he said it is a commercial test that is required. The test is: How many trips can a vessel constructed for carrying grain or freight make through the straits in any one season. Do you require to complete the railway to make that test? I say to the minister now that for the expenditure of one-half the money that is now being asked he could make a complete definite test—not something that is based on the experience of a man who worked his way through the icefields one year in July, another year in August. Last July a Hudson's Bay Company ship was crushed to pieces in the straits.

Mr. DUNNING: Is my hon. friend sure of that?

Mr. NICHOLSON: Yes, I am sure of it; I had a personal friend who was on board, and who with his wife was taken off across the ice. I realize that that is no argument, but the point is that you are building a railway there and spending a lot of money. In connection with that part of the railway which taps the country from which local freight may be secured, that is an entirely different question. But when you speak of building a railway to Port Nelson, and building at Port Nelson grain elevators and terminals for ships in order to test the commercial navigability of Hudson straits, you are simply throwing that much money away. The straits must be tested with ships, not with railways; you can put your ships back and forth through these straits and in that way find out whether or not the route is navigable.

Mr. ROGERS: The Hudson Bay railway and its proper construction have been matters of great moment to the people of the prairie provinces for many years. The hopes of those people are centred upon that route as being an outlet through which they may get their wheat and grain to the markets of the world at a very much lower rate than exists to-day. I must say, however, that I am sure the statement of the minister will be read with very great regret by the people of the west. They had their hopes raised even by the minister himself. A short time ago he made several speeches in regard to this matter, and in a

[Mr. Dunning.]

speech delivered in Saskatchewan he is reported in the Regina Leader of March 9, 1926, as follows:

Saskatchewan's political importance has become great says Hon. Charles A. Dunning. Tells Liberal women he is no ambassador of sectionalism and goes to the east to assist in developing a real Canadianism.

That was a very splendid declaration, and I congratulate the minister upon it. Later he dealt with the Hudson Bay railway, and this is what he said:

"As for the Hudson Bay railway," Mr. Dunning said, "we've been looking with longing eyes to our nearest sea coast, and in doing so are but following the national trend of thought; from time immemorial people have done that." He went on to say that forty years ago statesmen were promising to build the way to the Bay.

Probably this is what my hon. friend had in mind when he spoke a few moments ago.

Much of the road that has been built needed renovation, and ninety miles of steel were still unlaidd. He did not believe the people should spend more money on it than was needed to give it a fair trial, but the fair trial could not be given while the steel was ninety miles from the Bay.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my hon. friend brings in an estimate of \$3,000,000 which he claims will be all required to renovate the 332 miles already constructed, and apparently no provision has been made for the extension of the railway to the bay. This is where the disappointment will arise, because my hon. friend gave his pledge to the people of Saskatchewan that this ninety miles of railway would be constructed. The people of the west are tired of being put off with promises in this regard.

As my hon. friend has said, for forty years and more these people have had to live upon promises. The Liberal party was in power for fifteen years; they were promising the railway before they came into office; they were promising it when they went out of office, but they did not construct one mile. In 1911 the Conservative party came into office pledged to the construction of the Hudson Bay railway, and we immediately started to work, building the 332 miles spoken of and grading the line to Nelson. We also did a large amount of work at the terminal. This work would have been completed had it not been for war conditions which prevented.

Mr. DUNNING: My hon. friend is surely aware that work continued until October, 1918.

Mr. ROGERS: Of course; that is what I said.

Mr. DUNNING: And then the war stopped it?

Mr. ROGERS: Yes, the war conditions got worse and stopped it. However, the Conservative party was not in office then; it was the