

any settlement which may be agreed upon by the Railway Commission. Proposals have been made to this commission—I am officially informed. What is the nature of these proposals? I have no knowledge. I hope that as a result of the question which I put to the hon. Minister of Railways, a copy of the correspondence and documents relating to this proposed transaction will be brought down in the House. After giving the question full consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it would be in the interest of this region of the country and of the Canadian National, to build this branch line.

Mr. FORTIER (Labelle) (Translation): Mr. Chairman, I fully concur with the remarks which have just been made by the hon. members for Terrebonne (Mr. Prevost), and Laval-Two Mountains (Mr. Ethier). The twelve miles which it is proposed to build are, it is true, in the counties of Terrebonne and Two Mountains, nevertheless—I feel certain—very appreciable advantages would result for the county of Labelle. Indeed, it is a question of adding to the National Railways a branch line partly situated in the county of Terrebonne and partly in that of Labelle. The said branch line—it is known, owing to the resolution which appears further, in the Votes and Proceedings of the House—will be extended for a distance of two miles, from a place called China Clay to the village of St. Remy of Amherst. The advantages which would accrue from the construction of these two miles, in the county of Labelle, would lose a great deal of their value, if we had not—by the resolution which is at present under consideration by the House—the assurance that the Montfort Railway, that is, the line from St. Jerome to Huberdeau, will be connected to the National Railway system, so that the traffic which will be handled in the county of Labelle, along this line, may be in touch with the metropolis of Canada.

I think, Sir, that it would be bad policy for the government to sell this branch line to the Canadian Pacific Railway. I have nothing to say against the latter, for it has built, in my district, an extensive railway line, which reaches the settlement situated to the northwest of Montreal, at Mont Laurier. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company has greatly contributed to the settling of this northern region of the province of Quebec. The population of Labelle county has still need of this company to further extend its line twenty-seven miles, from Mont Laurier to St. Anne du Lac. I think that it is important for the National Railways to hold

[Mr. Ethier.]

on to the present branch line. The Canadian Pacific line, from Montreal to Mont Laurier, has been a paying proposition, and the branch line under discussion will equally be a paying proposition. The line which we intend to finish is not a new one. We are not asking the Minister of Railways or this House to build a new branch line, but simply to complete one which has been in existence for the last forty years, in a settlement where farming, lumber and mining industries thrive. Therefore, the Canadian National line which will extend from Montreal to St Remy of Amherst will certainly be one of the most paying propositions of the National Railways. For a long time past the people in my district have been appealing to the government. Our appeal has been endorsed by the business men of the metropolis. The Boards of Trade of Montreal have often urged this project through resolutions and have requested the minister to complete this line, by the construction of the twelve miles from St Eustache to St Jerome, and by the building of two other miles from China Clay to St Remy of Amherst. On the other hand, I think, the government would be making a great mistake in selling this branch line. For the last ten years the government has been asked to construct a branch line to connect Montreal with the Transcontinental. Charters have been granted and work has been done, such as locating etc. The North Railway was incorporated about ten years ago, and their rights were acquired by the Dominion government with the object—I state again—of constructing this branch line which would link up the metropolis of Canada to the Grand Trunk Pacific. There is no doubt that it is an important question. I think that the members for the city of Montreal would gladly welcome the realization of this project, for the construction of this branch line might result in bringing about later on the building of this other line. I feel certain that these same members are at heart with us when we request the completion of the present branch line because, once finished, it will be a step forward in the direction of the country drained by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. It is the most direct and the most suitable for the purpose of connecting Montreal with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. If the government were to deprive themselves of this railway, in a few years, when this second project will be submitted to them, when the city of Montreal and the western provinces will insist on linking up the Grand Trunk Pacific railway to Montreal, we will find it impossible to carry out the construction of a branch line to connect the Grand