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SPEECH BY SIR RICHARD McBRIDE

—ON—

The Kettle Valley Agreement

Mr. Speaker: In introducing the subject before the House this evening, I shall refer to what I regard as one of the most important movements in B.C., namely, the connection between the coast cities and the interior, by the Hope Mountain route.

There was a time when the principal topic to be heard of throughout the Province when the matter of railway construction was brought up was the Hope Mountain Railway. I recall how certain sections of the Province were disturbed and excited at the mention of such a project. It seemed that the future of the Province was entirely wrapped up in the scheme to provide this line of road. There was a great deal said on the hustings and in the press about the scheme, and it was openly suggested that the wisest course to pursue would be to borrow \$10,000,000 and proceed with the work on our own account.

It would not have been an arduous task to have assembled a large following of the electors, especially on the coast, who would have strongly approved such a course. It is not my place tonight to indulge in any observations as to the advisability of encouraging the electorate of the Province at that time to adopt a policy of building a Provincially-owned road. This would at once have involved the necessity of determining how much the project would cost and what position it would occupy in connection with other standard railway systems. It is sufficient for my purpose tonight, however, that the electorate did not seriously adopt this proposal.

When the present Administration assumed office in 1903, one of the first undertakings presented to us for consideration related to the Hope Mountain Railway. At that time we gave it every possible consideration, but were forced in the end to the conclusion that it was not then within the ability of the Province to attempt such construction. Meanwhile Mr. J. J. Hill had been busily

engaged in looking over the country, carrying out surveys and making observations that might lead to the undertaking of some definite action by the system he controls. This movement on his part had been preceded by a Government survey and examination, made at the time of the Dunsmuir Administration under the supervision of the Hon. E. Dewdney, which had resulted in the preparation of an interesting financial report upon the whole route from Hope into the Similkameen, one which I believe has proved of very great value to the various interests that have since looked over this district in order to make arrangements for railway construction.

Five or six years ago, when, in the opinion of the Government, the time had arrived for the submission to the people of a railway policy, one of the first projects taken into consideration by the Cabinet related to the old Hope Mountain scheme. We took the measure as fully as the means at our disposal would allow of the Nicola, Similkameen, Okanagan, and Hope Mountain sections, and finally we came to the conclusion that we should make some definite attempt to provide for British Columbia the long awaited contact between these interior sections and the coast.

As a result of negotiations extending over a considerable period of time, we were finally able to enter upon a bargain with the Kettle Valley Railroad, a bargain, Mr. Speaker, which promises for a certainty to develop within the next fourteen or sixteen months a railway contact between the coast and the various sections I have mentioned. It is only fair to say that it was not until the Government had exhausted every possible means of bringing about the building of this line by the V. V. & E. that we proceeded finally with our negotiations with the Kettle Valley.

The policy of the Government and of the Conservative party in British Columbia in regard to railways was that there should be no land grants, and the strong