

early reports, but the latest we have had are the reports of Capt. Anderson who has been in Hudson bay, season after season, and he probably knows the bay and straits better than any man living. His report practically declares that the navigation of Hudson straits is impracticable. He gives the period of navigation as not more than six weeks at best, and I think that that is a report which deserves some consideration. However, the question has been settled practically. Both Governments have decided that a railway shall be built to a harbour on Hudson bay. The point as to which I appeal to the hon. leader of the Government and to this House is this: I understand that the Hudson Bay railroad has not yet got so far that the Government could not, if they chose, deflect the road from Nelson to Port Churchill, and my only suggestion is that the Government should not be in a hurry completing the road to Port Nelson until they have first ascertained whether it is practicable at any reasonable cost to make a port at Nelson; Churchill is a port, there is no question about that, and the Government will save a great deal of money by going to Churchill. It is not unreasonable, considering the efforts of economy we are all supposed to make now, that having spent some ten millions on this undertaking, we should not spend any more until we feel sure we are going to get somewhere when the expenditure is ended.

Hon. Mr. LOUGHEED—This is a motion for bringing down papers dealing with the expenditure of public money at Port Nelson, etc. The duty of the Government, broadly speaking, is to ascertain what public opinion is upon any public question, and as far as possible to give effect to it. There is no doubt as to what public opinion, particularly in Western Canada, has been for a great number of years upon this particular subject. I do not propose, at the present moment, to enter into a discussion as to the merits or demerits of this question. It is needless to say that there is a very great diversity of opinion upon it. The duty which faced the late Government of coming to a conclusion on this subject was not a light one. It was a very serious one. Likewise the same duty has fallen upon the present Government. Both the late Government and the present Government have investigated this question to the greatest possible extent. They have exhausted every public source of

inquiry, commissions have been held, investigations have been made, inquiries have been pursued, and for years observers have been placed—that is in boats and otherwise—in the straits for the purpose of furnishing information as to whether the straits are navigable or not. The result of all that effort on the part of the Government of Canada has been a determination to proceed with this public work. I need not say to hon. gentlemen that scarcely has any great public work been undertaken, not only in Canada but in America—one might say in the world—that the same difficulty has not faced those who have assumed the responsibility of entering upon and carrying out the undertaking. There was a time in the history of Canada when the criticism as to the navigation of the St. Lawrence was just as serious as the criticisms being made to-day as to the navigation of the Hudson Straits, and had attention been given to those who held adverse opinions at that time, and whose judgment was relied on, that the St. Lawrence was not really navigable, I doubt if any great expenditure and effort would have been made to improve the navigation of that stream. Criticism of the building of the Canadian Pacific railway when it was first promulgated was quite as serious as it is against the navigation of Hudson Straits. Some of our public men, on whose judgment we placed great reliance in pre-confederation days, as well as after, voiced their best judgment when they said that the carrying out of such an undertaking was impracticable; and that the railway if built would not only involve the country in ruin, but the road itself would not make enough to pay for the grease for the wheels. One might refer to some criticisms as to the building of the Panama canal, and in fact any great work that has been constructed, but I doubt if any one can to-day mention a physical difficulty that has not been overcome by human ingenuity. I say advisedly that nature has not yet placed a physical difficulty that cannot be overcome by the ingenuity of the human mind, and I believe in this case that, owing to the ingenuity of mankind, owing to the progress of the present age, and particularly the progress which is yearly being made in navigation, the time will come when we will express the utmost surprise at the criticism which has been directed against the Hudson bay route. It seems to me if, in a primitive way, the Hudson Bay Company has been navigating those straits for 300 years without