

country has had no time to appreciate what the government proposes. The ministers do not understand all that is implied in the measure for which they are responsible. We have had seven ministers of the Crown speaking on this scheme, and not one out of the seven has fully justified the course which they are taking in connection with this line of railway. By this measure the government propose to undertake, and to pay for the construction of from 1,600 to 1,800 miles of railway, the greater part of it through an uninhabited country, estimated to cost as high as \$80,000,000. I say this is the most momentous question, from a financial point of view that has been submitted to this parliament since 1882. The people who pay the money are not among those who 'cannot wait.' I say that the people of this country could well afford to wait until such time as this transportation commission made their report, until such time as this government had surveys made, had estimates of the cost made, and were in a position to tell us just what sort of a scheme they were plunging into. Would it not have been better to have had the whole matter disposed of by the commission, as the government at first intended? This is a scheme which proposes to spend money, I might say, by the bucketful, by the barrelful; and the government, no doubt, are depending on the money argument to down the common sense of the people. I have not the slightest doubt that that is the argument they expect will prevail, if they are successful when they go to the country; because I do not imagine for one moment that, on its merits, this scheme has any chance with the people of Canada. Manitoba has already risen up against it; the east would never vote for the destruction of its own railway. What does the country think of it? Before taking this plunge, is it not fair to the people that they should have something to say about it; that they should have an opportunity of expressing their views? But that is evidently what the government do not want. They are unwilling to allow the people an opportunity of expressing their opinions on this great question, and that is the reason they are rushing through, at the end of the session, this Bill to confirm and ratify the agreement which they have so hastily and so hurriedly entered into with the promoters of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

As I said before, the North-west Territories are sufficient in extent and natural wealth to build up a great nation. Last year 100 million bushels of grain of all kinds were grown in the Territories. Fifty-three million bushels of wheat were grown in Manitoba, and 14 million bushels of wheat in the Territories. No doubt, congestion did exist from the wheat fields to the outlets, but there was no congestion from the outlets to the sea-board. Once the wheat got to Port Arthur there was no congestion whatever, the wheat was handled without

any trouble from that point. Moreover, there have been great improvements in the last year or two. We find that the Canadian Northern Railway are in a position to handle a very large portion of the crop of the west. I am informed, and I believe correctly, that the Canadian Northern have this year added 1,800 new cars to their system, with a capacity of 1,000 bushels each. They have added 30 new engines; that the Canadian Pacific Railway have added immensely to their rolling stock, and that both roads are ready to-day to handle the crop of that country without there being any congestion, or any loss or disturbance to the people of the North-west.

Now, Sir, I intend for a moment to say something in regard to our water-ways. We all recognize that Lake Superior is the national outlet for our Canadian North-west, the key of the St. Lawrence route, the first link in the great water-way through Canadian channels from the west to the east. Let me give some figures in regard to our water-ways, although they may have been given before :

	Miles.	Miles.
Chicago to Depot Harbour via lakes.	579	
Depot Harbour to Montreal via rail.	379	
		958
Chicago to Buffalo via lake.	889	
Buffalo to New York via N.Y.C.	440	
		1,329
Difference in favour of St. Lawrence route and port of Montreal.		371

Now, Sir, a great many members supporting the government have tried to convince themselves, and have tried to convince this House, that the grain of the west will be carried by rail. We can get no more convincing argument on this question than the commerce that passed through the American and Canadian canals at Sault Ste. Marie, and see what grain comes down through those canals. We find that in 1902 there were 76,730,965 bushels of grain passed through the American and Canadian canals at Sault Ste. Marie, showing, at any rate to my mind, conclusively that the grain of the western country will follow the water route. But that grain is only a part of the products which pass through those canals. We find that of grain other than wheat there were 27,740,822 bushels, and 8,910,240 barrels of flour passed through those canals, showing that the water route is able successfully, not only to compete with, but to take away from the railways which are running out of St. Paul and Minneapolis the freight which leaves those cities for the east. Now, we find these distances :

	Miles.	Miles.
Duluth to Depot Harbour via lake.	644	
Depot Harbour to Montreal via rail.	379	
		1,023
Duluth to Buffalo via lake.	997	
Buffalo to New York via N.Y.C.	440	
		1,437
Difference in favour of Montreal.		414