

but if opportunity is given to them in this way, many of the causes of dissatisfaction, not large in themselves individually, but in their entirety very large, would be brought to his attention. Then, through his higher officials these various complaints could be collected and a composite picture of the necessary changes in the regulations brought to the attention of the board. That is the matter of national importance I bring to his attention.

Now, as a matter of importance to Saskatchewan and Alberta I bring to his attention once more the need at this time of something being done at an early day to complete the gaps in the Bonnyville-St. Walburg line and also the Heinsburg-Frenchman Butte line. I know what the reasons were for discontinuance. Financial conditions made it impractical to continue them. Depression was everywhere in our country as it was throughout the world. Then, with the improved conditions came the war, and during the war no construction work, however necessary, could be proceeded with because of the exigencies and demands of war.

But today we have in these two lines the uncompleted ends going nowhere. In other words, we have two lines of railway, one of which is to join up with the Hudson Bay railway and the other of which goes in a southerly direction. In one case the railway ends forty miles from its terminal, and in the other, a little less than that. As the minister knows, thousands of these people went into the area in northern Saskatchewan and Alberta believing that the railway would be completed. They have been waiting for the past fourteen or fifteen years. I know the minister could do no better thing to open up the northern parts of Saskatchewan and Alberta than to say that something would be done to complete these gaps.

Representations have been made before in this connection. It is not a political matter. In this connection I think of the hon. member for Athabaska and the hon. member for Davenport who, as in so many other matters affecting the welfare of the western provinces, has been one of the great proponents of the completion of these two lines.

These are two matters I bring to the attention of the minister. One is a national matter which will develop a greater morale among the employees of the Canadian National railways than ever before, and the other will do much toward raising the hopes of those who believe in the future of the northern parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Mr. CHEVRIER: I should like to answer the recommendations made by the hon. mem-

ber for Lake Centre, and in doing so I would deal, first, with the last one having to do with filling the gaps between Bonnyville and St. Walburg, and Heinsburg and Frenchman Butte. I am fairly familiar with the question, because last year I received a delegation which recommended the filling of those gaps. Then, less than a week ago I saw another delegation of some eight or nine people, and saw them in western Canada not very far from the place where the gap is situated.

As I pointed out to them, and as I must point out to the hon. member and the committee, the reason these gaps were not filled, and no new construction of branch lines was contemplated during the war, was lack of materials and lack of labour.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: That is true.

Mr. CHEVRIER: The position today is that during the war years the railways were not able to replenish their stock and equipment, with the result that there is a great deal to do in that respect. I am thinking at the present time of boxcars for which there is a tremendous need, not only on the Canadian National Railways, but on the Canadian Pacific railway. While I am authorized to speak only for the Canadian National Railways, the position on the Canadian Pacific railway is exactly the same. They must put in new rails; they must lay ballasting and obtain boxcars, refrigerator cars and reefer cars. That is the reason why the railroads have not been able thus far to undertake a programme of branch line construction or branch line extension. These remarks which I am now making have to do with the question raised by the hon. member for Swift Current this evening, and they will serve to answer the request that he made. I think, when the position of the railroads in so far as equipment is concerned is better, they will be able to consider this. I told the delegation, as I am telling the hon. member now, that when the time comes to build branch lines and to fill these gaps, the gap between Heinsburg and Frenchman Butte is one that will be given consideration.

With reference to the other matter of national scope of which he spoke, I must say that I have not the rules and regulations of the pension board before me. I thank my hon. friend for sending them over to me now. My recollection is that the rules and regulations provide for a pension board made up of three representatives of the railroads and two of the brotherhoods. I may be mistaken, but that is my recollection. If that is so, the complaints which he makes concerning inequities and anomalies in the interpretation of the regula-