

regard to what has been said about the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario railway? That railway did exactly what the Hudson Bay railway might have done at any time between the time that the first construction was started and to-day if the same conditions had applied. If minerals had been disclosed along the line of the Hudson Bay railway that were disclosed along the line of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario railway during the construction period we would not be debating the construction of the Hudson Bay railway. It would have been a commercial success long before now. But unfortunately they have not been so disclosed. If the government will take the position that this is a colonization railway, built for the purpose of developing that country, I will say: Go ahead and build it.

Mr. DUNNING: That is one of its purposes.

Mr. NICHOLSON: If that is one of its purposes, before any other purpose is gone ahead with and before this country is committed to this other vast expenditure, parliament and the Canadian people should see to it that all the facts as to the possibility of navigating the Hudson bay and strait are made known. Just as surely as we are standing here to-night—and my opinion is that the minister knows it—in order to make the Hudson Bay railway with its terminus at Port Nelson a factor in the handling of the grain traffic of western Canada, this country will have to spend \$50,000,000 on railway terminals and elevators at Port Nelson, to say nothing about providing special ships. Let me repeat what I said before. I am not expressing any opinion as to the feasibility of navigating the Hudson strait, because I do not know. I am in the same position as the rest of the 245 members of this House. That is the position we are in and it is solely because the government, if they intend to go ahead with this project, have taken no steps whatever to provide any information upon which a proper judgment may be based as to whether this route is feasible or not.

Mr. DUNNING: In order to clarify the matter before the committee I would like to ask my hon. friend a few questions with reference to the statement placed in his hands by his unknown railway expert. When I come before the committee and make a statement, based upon the authority of the engineering and operating officers of the Canadian National, that this 332 miles of railway can be put into operating conditions on a branch

line basis for \$3,000,000, it is an important matter that my hon. friend should produce figures demonstrating that to put this 332 miles into shape for operation on a main line basis will cost \$10,000,000, I believe he said. If a member assumes the responsibility of advancing figures, he should be willing to give the committee information regarding them. He spoke for instance about sidings. What is the amount involved in grading and laying tracks upon sidings on this stretch of 332 miles?

Mr. NICHOLSON: Twenty-one miles of sidings at \$10,000 a mile.

Mr. DUNNING: That is how much money?

Mr. NICHOLSON: Multiply it. Is that an excessive figure?

Mr. DUNNING: Is that for grading alone?

Mr. NICHOLSON: Yes.

Mr. DUNNING: The steel?

Mr. NICHOLSON: Steel rails for sidings will cost \$264,000.

Mr. DUNNING: My hon. friend is aware that we already have sidings on this 332 miles.

Mr. NICHOLSON: There may be spur tracks and sidings, but the minister will not say that on the Hudson Bay railway there are passing tracks that can take care of main line traffic and the rolling stock that would be necessary to handle that traffic.

Mr. DUNNING: I was not responsible; the Minister of Railways of the Conservative party was responsible for starting the construction of that railway on a main line basis. I am not blaming him for it. He made provision for 27.8 miles of sidings in 332 miles of line, and I am informed that the sidings are, in fact, main line sidings. If my hon. friend would tell us who his expert was we might know whether he knew what he was talking about.

Mr. NICHOLSON: I am willing to leave it to the judgment of the House and of the country as to whether or not I know what I am talking about.

Mr. DUNNING: I did not say my hon. friend; I said my hon. friend's expert, as to whether he knew what he was talking about. There are in existence 27.8 miles of sidings in 332 miles of line, whereas my hon. friend's expert asks for only 21 miles in order to make it a main line.

Mr. NICHOLSON: We are at the point where we have 27.8 miles of main line passing