

If honourable gentlemen possessed all the information that I do, I do not think they would for one moment consent to this proposal: they would realize immediately how unfair it would be to proceed with these works under existing financial conditions. Under this Bill about \$11,000,000 would be the proportion assigned for construction in Alberta and Saskatchewan. That expenditure is to extend over a period of three years, which means that the expenditure during the next twelve months would be about \$3,500,000. If the Government thinks these roads are necessary, it should be easy to apply \$3,000,000 of the \$73,000,000 provided in the Estimates to build these roads and thus avoid any delay. In fact, as soon as we passed the first Supply Bill, under which we voted one-sixth of the supply for the year, the work on these roads could have been commenced. In some cases bridges have been built and the roads have been graded, and it is not such a serious thing if this Bill is not passed.

The most serious thing that could happen would be for the members of the House of Commons and the Senate from now on to give to the Board of Railway Management the right to go ahead and build railways without first obtaining a vote from Parliament, and without the details, which we have had in the past, being placed before us.

Let me give the House some idea of the amount we will have voted when the Supplementary Estimates now before the House of Commons have been passed. The Main Estimates for the year amount to \$427,551,235.73. Of that sum \$73,000,000 is for the construction and betterment and operation of the railways. Then there is a Supplementary Estimate of \$5,500,000—I think that is for bonuses to the Civil Service. There is a further Supplementary Estimate of \$18,202,105.66, and a still further Supplementary Estimate of \$14,711,351.05. These sums total \$465,924,692.44. In addition to that there are other amounts which do not appear in the Estimates. By this means, the Government will be able to show that their Estimates were only so and so. I am not finding fault with that. We voted \$10,000,000 for the Montreal Harbour Commission, and \$5,000,000 for the Vancouver Harbour Commission under Bills similar to this one, and under which we gave them power to spend the money as they liked. I suppose the management of the Canadian National Railways has looked up the matter, and has thought it would be a delightful scheme for them to build a thousand miles of railway this year, or another thousand next year if they did not have to

report to Parliament, where the expenditure might come under criticism. For that reason they ask in this Bill for \$28,307,900. If the Bill were to go through, the total amount of money voted this year would amount to \$509,232,592.

In the face of that, honourable gentlemen, I ask is it fair to adopt any such policy as this for the construction of railways, many of which, I claim, are unnecessary and will only add to the deficit of the Canadian National Railways? In addition to the cost of building the roads, the cost of equipment must be taken into consideration. The Government of the day states that there will be a loss on the railway of \$50,000,000 or \$60,000,000 this year; in fact that the deficit will be greater than last year. I understood that when the present Government was in opposition, and even after it came into power, the watchword was economy. I could show, honourable gentlemen, that the expenditures to-day are greater than they have been in the past and that if the Bill is passed the watchword should no longer be economy, but extravagance. I do not believe it is in the public interest to pass this Bill, and I trust that it will receive the six months' hoist, and that the Government will realize the situation and bring in Supplementary Estimates when they want to build railroads, so that we may have an opportunity of dealing with them on their merits. We all know that railroads must be built; but they must be built with an eye to reducing the loss on the Canadian National Railways so that they will become an asset to the country instead of a liability.

Hon. Sir EDWARD KEMP: My difficulty in connection with this Bill is not only the form in which it is presented to this House, although I agree with those who have spoken in that regard. I also agree with the motion moved by my leader, and intend to support it.

Various plausible reasons can be advanced, not only with respect to the building of the railroads which we are now considering, but with respect to dozens of other projected lines in this country. We have a sparsely settled country, a great deal of which may be said to be very new country, and it is owing, to some extent at any rate, to the general railway policy of the past 20 years that we find ourselves in such a difficult position. I need not go into the question of who is responsible for the railway situation in this country.

It is my intention to address the members of this House for but a few minutes. My reasons for supporting the motion of the leader of the Opposition are perhaps somewhat differ-

Hon. Mr. REID.