

Mr. DUNNING: The contract for the second section was let by the Borden government in 1912.

Mr. MANION: How much was the first section?

Mr. CAHAN: A contract of 185 miles.

Mr. DUNNING: I think that is right. In August, 1912, Port Nelson and Fort Churchill were visited by the then Minister of Railways, the late Hon. Frank Cochrane, and Port Nelson was selected as the terminus of the Hudson Bay railway. In December, 1912, the contract was let for the final section of the railway. In 1913 work was actively in progress on the terminals at Nelson. In the autumn of 1917 the work on the harbour terminals was closed down. In March, 1918, the pre-emption and homestead provisions of the Dominion Lands Act were suspended by order in council and subsequently deleted from the act by the amendment of 1913, chapter 19, section 28. In October, 1918, work on the railway was suspended with tracks laid to mile 332 including the bridge over the Nelson river, and the road was then turned over to the Canadian Northern board for operation. I mentioned that the most that was ever expended on railway construction in any one year during the whole period of construction was \$3,256,000.

Some questions were raised this afternoon by the hon. member for East Algoma (Mr. Nicholson) regarding the practicability of the route. I offer as evidence in that connection the report of the Senate committee of 1920. I do not think it can be said that the committee in question was geographically packed in favour of the west. It consisted of six Conservatives and five Liberals, the names of the gentlemen being as follows: Senator Fowler, New Brunswick, Chairman; Senator Daniel, New Brunswick; Senator Lougheed, Alberta; Senator Michener, Alberta; Senator Schaffner, Manitoba; Senator Willoughby, Saskatchewan; Senator Bostock, British Columbia; Senator Casgrain, Quebec; Senator Dandurand, Quebec; Senator De Veber, Alberta and Senator Watson, Manitoba. There was only one member from Saskatchewan, and there were two from Manitoba, three from Alberta, one from British Columbia, two from Quebec and two from New Brunswick. Neither British Columbia nor Quebec nor New Brunswick could be regarded as partial to the Hudson Bay project and I believe the attitude of Alberta even at that date might be described as strictly judicial. The committee made a unanimous report to which I would

refer the hon. gentleman for an answer. This was one of its findings:

Your committee makes the following findings:

(1) That the Hudson Bay route is feasible and will probably in time be profitable.

A committee such as this and appointed by such a body surely could not be accused of being wildly visionary or radical; surely it would weigh carefully all the evidence submitted, extracts from which may be found in the pages of the report. It is of course impossible to estimate the cost of such a project as this as accurately as one could in planning a branch line in known territory. There are many unknown or little known factors in this case, but it is worthy of note that a committee appointed by the Senate of Canada as recently as 1920 should reach unanimously, on a question of this nature, such a report as has been submitted.

Mr. McGIBBON: Will the minister read the third finding.

Mr. DUNNING: I will read them all.

Mr. CAHAN: Read the whole report.

Mr. DUNNING: The report itself covers three or four pages and most of it would not be to the liking of my hon. friend from St. Lawrence-St. George (Mr. Cahan).

Mr. CAHAN: I have read it.

Mr. DUNNING: These are the findings of the committee:

Your committee makes the following findings upon the evidence adduced before them:

(1) That the Hudson Bay route is feasible and will probably in time be profitable.

(2) That the season of navigation under present conditions is at least four months in length and may by reason of improvements in aids to navigation be considerably increased.

I here call the attention of hon. gentlemen to the fact that this afternoon I presented figures based only on two and a half months of navigation.

(3) That in the opinion of this committee sufficient care was not taken in the selection of Nelson as the terminus of the railway, and that the government should not make further important expenditures upon this port without first making a new and thorough examination into the relative merits of Churchill and Nelson as a terminus for the railroad.

(4) That the waters of the strait and rivers tributary to the bay teem with fish and valuable marine animals, and we believe that the bay is equally well stocked but there has not yet been sufficient data collected as to the extent of the fisheries of the bay to enable an authoritative statement to be made as to their value.

(5) That the mines already discovered in the Hudson Bay district are of sufficient number and richness to indicate the existence of great potential mineral wealth.

(6) Your committee feel that they cannot too strongly endorse the valuable suggestion of Mr.