

traffic now offering in that district to enable the road to pay its way. That was the summing up of their correspondence with me, and also the summing up of some of the reports made in regard to the project.

Four different reports have been made. The last one was in 1932, when a committee of engineers was appointed partly, if not altogether, at the request of myself. The commission was composed of Mr. Gzowski, of the Canadian National Railways, Mr. Fairbairn, of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Mr. Crysedale, as the third man, not appointed by the province of British Columbia, but whose appointment was agreed to by that province. Although the commissioners did not visit the section in connection with the making of the report, all had previously visited the section, on various occasions and were familiar with the problem. Their report was tabled in this House of Commons and on a number of occasions has been referred to in debate. These gentlemen took the attitude that they could not make a recommendation. While their findings have already been placed on record, although not in this debate, for the sake of the present record perhaps I might be permitted to read a brief synopsis of their report. They say:

At the time the 1925 report was made, local interests were mainly concerned in obtaining a western outlet to cheapen their freight cost to the Pacific, and supply further railway mileage in the district. Since that time, a reduction of freight rates has been accorded them, now substantially equaling rates which would obtain if a western outlet were in use.

Further on they say:

In view of the above, our conclusions are:
1. No western outlet is justified for the present, as the existing railway furnishes the most economical route. It will take many times the present traffic to justify another railway outlet.

2. The Obed route for a western outlet is the most favourable from a railway economic standpoint, considering the present phase of the railway situation.

3. We recommend that the matter of a final route be decided when the question is a practical one, believing that by the time the volume of traffic has reached a point where a western outlet is justified, general and possible local conditions may have materially changed. When the decision is imperative, the whole situation should be reviewed, in order to appraise all the contributing factors, including the potential traffic which may accrue from the lands beyond the definite areas included in this report.

That in brief was the report of the Crysedale committee, if I may term it such, signed by J. M. R. Fairbairn, chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific; C. S. Gzowski, chief en-
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gineer of construction, Canadian National Railways, and C. R. Crysedale, consulting engineer. I am quoting it from the unrevised Hansard of March 14, 1932, when I put it on Hansard during the discussion that then took place.

After that report was made public both Sir Henry Thornton and Mr. Beatty informed me that they agreed with it. They took the attitude, as has been taken by others, that what was needed more than a direct outlet was more branch lines in that territory. In that regard I have noticed that Mr. Brownlee, the premier of Alberta, appearing not very long ago before the royal commission on transportation, generally known as the Duff commission, which was investigating the whole railway problem of this country, gave some opinions which I think it is well to put on Hansard, Mr. Brownlee being a particularly able statesman and a man who does speak to a large extent for a considerable portion of the province of Alberta. He is quoted as follows:

All I will say is this: So far as our provincial government is concerned we would not say that there is such a necessity for that outlet—

He was speaking of the Peace River outlet:—that in a time of financial difficulty the matter should become an urgent one. We do believe that what is far more urgent is that there should be a moderate expansion of branch lines in order that the railways may secure the full benefit of the potential development that is there and the settlement that has gone in. Settlement has gone into the Peace River country to a very large extent in districts fifty or sixty miles from any railway, and as a provincial government we urge very strongly that the small expenditure necessary to provide branch lines to enable those who have gone in to develop their holdings and to make a contribution will be far wiser at the moment than any coast outlet.

He also referred to a telegram from Grande Prairie to the Duff commission with reference to this outlet, and said:

I have not read it, but I assume you will find that that telegram differs somewhat from the opinion that we have expressed. We have not so far been able to bring ourselves in line with the views either of the people of Vancouver or of the people immediately at Grande Prairie that the expenditure on another line of railway through to the Pacific coast, so far as this province is concerned, is a necessity. It may be that the development in the northern part of British Columbia would seem to justify a line of that kind, but we would certainly emphasize strongly that what we conceive to be the needs of the Peace River country will best be served by branch lines rather than by such an extension.