

those charters certain points which would require changes; and when an item is put into the estimates, the charter cannot be discussed or changed; all one can do is to say: I vote against the estimate because the construction of a line in that particular locality is not required. The better way to serve the public interest and that of the people in the West would be to give them an opportunity to say what lines are of most imperative and immediate necessity and to make any objections or suggestions they wish. Other companies have to make an application to Parliament, to come before the Railway Committee and to go through the usual routine, and anybody who has an objection to offer may cite it. This afternoon I cited a case which brought about the biggest fight there ever was in the Railway Committee. I refer to the Canadian Northern, this very company, and Mr.—Sir Adam Beck, I ought to say, because titles are still under the consideration of the committee—that makes the President of the Council (Mr. Rowell) smile, I suppose before we get through with this session or before the Committee reports, I shall have the pleasure of calling him “Sir” also.

Mr. ROWELL: I am afraid the hon. member will be disappointed.

Mr. BUREAU: The question was, if I remember rightly, whether the Canadian Northern or the Hydro-Electric Company, should have priority of right of way on a piece of land. The Hydro-Electric declared: We will give the Canadian Northern right of way if we have priority, and the Canadian Northern said: We will give the Hydro-Electric right of way if we have priority. Such things may happen at any time, and it is unfair to revive a charter which is extinct, when no work has been done on the line, without giving an opportunity to the parties interested and the people in the district through which the line is to pass, an opportunity of voicing their opinions. I am willing, however, to grant an extension of five years for any line that has been commenced. We should not be asked to grant this extension of time without having seen the plans, not knowing where the railway runs, having just one copy of the list of lines which are supposed to have out-lived their charters and for which a renewal or resurrection is granted. It is not fair that we should vote on such things without having an opportunity of discussing in this committee the merits of each line, and of knowing

when work has been commenced, how much has been done on the line, what has been the expenditure per mile, what the line is going to cost and how far we should engage the credit of the country.

The Acting Prime Minister said this afternoon that if the directors of the Canadian Pacific asked the stockholders to approve the renewal of valuable charters of that road, they would not hesitate to do so. But the cases are not parallel. That is a private enterprise, with private money invested; but in this case it is the people's money that is being invested. I do not want any of these lines in the province of Quebec. All I ask the Government to do, if they undertake public ownership, is to give us better service. I would suggest for one thing that the Minister of Railways see the manager of the National system, if he wants it to compete with the Canadian Pacific, and have a train start from Montreal and go right up to La Tuque, instead of from Montreal to Garneau Junction, and then to Hérvey Junction. The present service means that the industries at La Tuque and above that point have to wait a week for their freight and two or three days for their express. I would ask the minister to give me an opportunity of meeting him and the general manager on Monday to discuss this matter.

Mr. J. D. REID: The president will be here on Tuesday, and I shall be very glad to arrange for a meeting on that day.

Mr. BUREAU: I have received instructions from certain parties in La Tuque to ask for a hearing before the Railway Commission. If the minister will agree to have these people meet the president and myself on Tuesday or Wednesday, I will telephone them to come to Ottawa.

Mr. J. D. REID: I shall be glad to arrange for that, and if the president is too busy on Tuesday I will arrange for a meeting on Wednesday.

Mr. BUREAU: I want my good friends to see that in spite of my opposition to public ownership I want to help the system as much as I can. I think if we were to scratch hon. gentlemen opposite we should find that in some of them the principles of public ownership are not very deep-rooted; but every man of course is entitled to his opinion, and we should not impute motives.

Would it not be well for the minister to let us know how much has been expended on the line from a point on the constructed line of the Canadian Northern railway at or near Edmonton, thence in a northeasterly