

ready done? The reason I ask is that it looks to me from the programme submitted to-night as if the department have completely lost a railroad in the province of Saskatchewan. I refer to the line that was built from the Canadian Northern at Lumsden to Craven, and which has been operated in a sort of a way for freight purposes for a number of years. About seven or eight years ago the line was graded from Craven down through the Qu'Appelle valley to serve a very thickly settled district that is badly in need of railway accommodation. Is it the policy to lay steel on grading done in the last year or two and neglect grading completed five or six years previously? It seems to me there ought to be some preference given to the grading first done.

Hon. M. REID: It is quite evident from the remarks of the hon. member that I have not that line on my list. The policy is to lay rails on the grading already done at the earliest possible date. I will make inquiries and when we come to the item again at another sitting I will have full information ready.

Mr. KNOX: Will the same assurance be given in reference to other lines in Saskatchewan that the minister stated a little while ago were already graded?

Hon. Mr. REID: I gave a list of the lines in Saskatchewan and stated that the management intended to lay rails as fast as they could get them from the main line.

Mr. TURGEON: When I made the statement that only 24 per cent of the grain of the West was exported through Canadian ports I could not lay my hand on the information. It has reference to the six months ending last February.

Mr. FIELDING: May I be permitted to call the minister's attention to another little line in connection with the Halifax and South Western? We are repeatedly assured by hon. members of the Government that we must all practice self-denying ordinances and not ask for new construction of public works owing to the financial situation. That argument has very much weight, but exception appears to be made, and perhaps justly made, in the matter of branch railways. My hon. friend has read a list of branch railroads in connection with the Canadian Northern which are to be constructed in the West, most of them lines of considerable length and involving large expenditure. I take it for granted that these are really urgent matters, and I do

[Mr. Cowan.]

not wish to be understood as offering any objection, but there is a small matter down in my county of Shelburne affecting the branch line running into the town of Lockport. Lockport is one of the most important fishing towns in Nova Scotia. It is about four miles away from the main line, and its traffic at present is done by ferry. That is better than nothing, and the people are glad to have it, but at the same time the business of the community would be much better developed if they had this siding—it is not more than that—of four miles. I mentioned the matter last year when the minister was talking of branch lines in the West running into an expenditure of millions of dollars, and I said I thought it would not be asking too much to have this small branch line of four miles constructed. I think I made such an impression on the mind of the minister because I find he answered me in these terms—I am sorry I cannot find the reference at the moment, but he spoke to the effect that the matter was already engaging the attention of his department, and he did not see any reason why the line should not be constructed. Nothing has been done. I am not making a complaint on that score but I do think a strong case can be made out for this little branch if the Government is going to indulge in new expenditures of that nature in other parts of the country. The hon. gentleman assured me last year that he would send a responsible officer down there to see the people concerned and report on the traffic prospects. I know when Mr. Hanna was in Nova Scotia making a general survey he was to have looked into the matter, but he was summoned back to Ottawa on urgent business. He assured me that he would send some one down to inspect and report. I cannot say that that has not been done, but I have heard nothing further about the matter. I would again urge the importance of this little branch line. If we were refusing branch lines everywhere I would not make this request, but this small branch of four miles I think can, for business reasons, be amply justified. I hope my hon. friend will again take a favourable view of it and see if my request cannot be complied with.

Hon. Mr. REID: I well remember my hon. friend bringing this matter to my attention last year. I cannot remember now what was done but I will make inquiries and have the information ready at the next sitting of the committee.