

Hudson Bay Railway

this afternoon. When men who are in authority in the West are questioned upon the feasibility of the Hudson Bay railway, they always sheer off from the main question, and ask "which would you rather have, the Hudson Bay railway on branch line railways?" We know, Mr. Speaker, that branch line railways are vitally necessary to western Canada, but I claim there is no connection whatever between them. This special vote, as I showed a moment ago, was created for the purpose of building the Hudson Bay railway. It is a national undertaking and has nothing to do with the branch line construction.

I notice by the Estimates that we are going to spend \$11,800,000 this year for the Welland canal. I claim it would be just as right and fair for us, and for hon. members who oppose the Hudson Bay railway, or who advocate branch lines in lieu of the Hudson Bay railway, to argue that we should cut down the estimates for the Welland canal. I noticed last year the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Motherwell) took that side of the question, but when the question of a grant of \$8,000,000 for the Welland canal was proposed, I observed the Minister of Agriculture had nothing whatever to say about branch line construction. I think he still holds that view. When the vote for \$11,800,000 for the Welland canal comes before the House, I at least expect him to move for a very substantial reduction in that item.

I have the honour to represent a constituency in the northwestern part of Saskatchewan which is one of the finest mixed farming constituencies in Canada. There is no doubt about that. It lends itself to immigration. Large tracts of land are waiting for the settler, and I think the hon. Minister of the Interior (Mr. Stewart), if he would look over that country and see the land that we have there ready for settlement, would immediately become a very strong advocate of the building of the Hudson Bay railway, because it would be of very great assistance to him in bringing in new settlers. We must have a shorter outlet for our wheat, our live stock and dairy produce—the products of the farm. If the western farmer is to continue to place his products in the markets of the world in open competition with the products of all the countries of the world, having to buy all the commodities which enter into the cost of production on his farm, he cannot under present conditions succeed, but it would certainly be a vast help to the western farmer if the Hudson bay project were completed. If vessels were sailing out of Hudson bay with cattle, dairy products and wheat, and if it were only possible for the government to

[Mr. Davies.]

increase the British preference, so that the vessels coming back to Hudson bay could bring back a return cargo, it would have a very great bearing on the freight rate we would have to pay. I agree with the hon. member for Prince Albert and every other western member in the House, that we have a great country and a great heritage in western Canada. I am not pessimistic. The West does not breed pessimists. I believe if we had a fair field and no favour, if the government would assist us and complete the Hudson Bay railway, western Canada would yet become what we always conceived it was designed by nature to be, the granary of the Empire.

Mr. WILLIS KEITH BALDWIN (Stanstead): I cannot believe that politics have been played by either the Liberal or the Conservative party in undertaking such a vast construction as the Hudson Bay railway. I have listened to the speeches and I have not heard anything in this House in opposition to the proposition, as the hon. member who has just resumed his seat has suggested. The member for Lunenburg (Mr. Duff) has referred to the climatic conditions and has spoken of the ice which is to be found in the Hudson strait. Considering that so much money has been spent on this undertaking, I am going to say frankly, without hedging, that if I understand the amount that is to be spent on this railway, I am in favour of it, because I understand this railway has been graded and the rails are now there, and it would be a great waste not to open up a country that has such vast possibilities. The natural resources of this country have been mentioned in this debate, and I think it would be well worth while to construct the line, if we only got to the navigable part of the river, which I understand is about 30 miles from the end of the rails already laid.

I cannot believe that this railway would hurt Port Arthur, at the head of the Great Lakes, or would injure the railways of this country. Quite the contrary. I believe you cannot benefit one part of the great Dominion of Canada without helping the whole country. The member for South York (Mr. Maclean) has said that Ontario has a railway within 130 miles of—he said Hudson bay, although, I think he meant James bay. In looking at the map I see our Transcontinental railway, running from Quebec to Winnipeg, runs within 250 or 300 miles of the south end of James bay. I will be glad when the province of Ontario has completed that railway, and I likewise will be glad when the great province of Quebec, builds a railway to James bay. Hudson bay has more than 3,000 miles