

In the first named railway there is a gap of only about forty miles. It breaks the railway, of course, and is a source of great annoyance and inconvenience to those who happen to live along the line; and besides, it prevents those who live on either side of it from getting to the other end of the railway. That is to say, those who live on the east side of the gap can patronize only that eastern section of the railway. If they wish to get to the west end they have to go a considerable distance east until they reach another line of railway, and then get on that other line and go to the west. The same applies to those who live on the west side of the gap.

We have asked that this forty miles be completed. It is not a great thing, but it is an inconvenience which has been suffered by these people over a considerable number of years. I ask the minister if he will make a special point of doing something about this particular forty-mile gap.

With respect to the other piece of railway, the line has been built at some expense to the north out of Alberta to a place called Cold Lake. That particular piece of line is a good revenue producer; my information is that it is bringing in a lot of money. The break extends now to the southeast and joins up again with the Canadian National railway which at the present time ends at a place called St. Walburg.

I cannot say anything that has not already been said. But I do most earnestly call the attention of the minister to the gaps in these two branch lines, and I should like him to say whether anything has been done toward finishing them, or whether something may be done very soon.

Mr. BENTLEY: Mr. Speaker, before second reading—

Mr. TOWNLEY-SMITH: May I have an answer?

Mr. CHEVRIER: This is not the point at which to answer questions. It should be done in committee of the whole.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would call the attention of hon. members to the fact that we are at the stage of second reading, and that if they have questions to ask they might better wait until we have reached the committee stage. I would ask hon. members to confine their remarks to the general principles of the bill.

Mr. PAUL EDMOND GAGNON (Chicoutimi) (Translation): Before the motion for second reading is carried, I wish to say a few words and make some suggestions as to what could be done in Chicoutimi county by the Canadian National Railways.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would ask the hon. member to confine his remarks, during this debate, to the general principle of the bill before the house. In regard to specific questions, I believe that they should be discussed at the proper time in committee of the whole, when the hon. member and all members of the house will be free to deal with special subjects. They will then have the opportunity of asking questions which will be answered by the minister.

Mr. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of asking questions of the hon. minister, but I propose to make a statement on certain problems of special concern to my county.

Hon. LIONEL CHEVRIER (Minister of Transport): Before the hon. member takes the floor, may I remind him that the bill before the house authorizes certain loans to the Canadian National Railways and does not provide for the hon. member dealing with conditions in his own constituency. He will be given this opportunity when the estimates for the Department of Transport are brought down.

Mr. GAGNON: Are we not allowed to discuss any financial matters of the Canadian National Railways under this bill?

Mr. CHEVRIER: The financial matters dealt with in this bill.

Mr. GAGNON: This bill affects Chicoutimi county as much as any other constituency in Canada.

(Text):

Mr. HOMUTH: Mr. Speaker, we are now on second reading of the bill. Surely it is not permissible to ask questions back and forth at this time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have suggested that at this stage the discussion be confined to the general principle. The purpose of the bill is to authorize the provision of moneys to meet certain capital expenditures made and capital indebtedness incurred by the Canadian National Railways system during the calendar year 1947. I would ask the hon. members to continue their remarks to the principle of the bill before the house. They may question the minister when we reach the committee stage.

(Translation):

Mr. GAGNON: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, your objection is premature. I feel that I have the right to discuss the affairs of the Canadian National Railways in my constituency when such a bill is submitted to the house.