

*The Budget—Mr. Simpson*

developing and constructing roads into many areas in the northern part of Alberta and the Northwest Territories. This particular brief points out that within 20 years the town of Fort McMurray will be a city of some 30,000 people or more and that it will be the logical service centre of the eastern Arctic. The report mentions that this town is approximately 850 miles from Baker Lake, an inland harbour on Hudson Bay, and 750 miles from Bathurst Inlet a reportedly excellent harbour on the Arctic Ocean. They put forth a very strong case. I congratulate them on their efforts and wish them the best of success. However, these facts immediately suggest to me the necessity for the provision of transportation facilities, either by highway or railway or both. Huge sums of money would be required to provide what is felt to be a very desirable outlet to the sea. One cannot deny the desirability and necessity of such measures.

I wish to point out that neither of the two proposed harbours have been developed and that development would entail huge expenditures. I suggest to the government and this House that Canada already has a northern outlet to the sea from Western Canada in a developed port at Churchill where many millions of dollars have already been spent on providing wharfage, loading and unloading equipment and a Canadian National Railways connection. These moneys were spent over a period extending from 1929 to seven years ago. The port of Churchill is the logical gateway to the Arctic.

Although the port of Churchill is serviced by a railway, it has as yet no highway linking it with the rest of North America. A highway is of vital importance to the future development of port facilities which are presently available. When I speak of a highway to Churchill, I am not speaking in terms of 750 or 800 miles, but something in the neighbourhood of 250 miles. I, therefore, appeal to the government that before any extensive planning is done with respect to opening other harbour facilities immediate action be taken to further develop and utilize the facilities at Churchill which have proven to provide savings to those who have used them.

● (5:20 p.m.)

The extension of the highway from Thompson, Manitoba to Churchill, would not only pay for itself in a few years but it would open up a unique tourist attraction in North America. Canadians, particularly residents of

[Mr. Simpson.]

Manitoba, are worried because residents of Churchill are so frustrated at this time that they are requesting the relocation of the provincial boundaries so as to allow their area to be included in the Northwest Territories. As I have said to the townspeople on many occasions, it would be in very bad taste for me, as one who is not a resident of Churchill, to suggest what they should do in this respect. But it is very easy for me to understand their frustration, as it would be easy for anyone who is familiar with the situation there to do so. It is easy to understand that they should be inclined to take measures of this nature and withdraw from Manitoba. As a Manitoban, I would regret this move very much and I hope that steps can be taken in the near future through co-operation with the federal and provincial governments to make a greater use of this port. Highway construction would enable this to take place.

I have criticized the government strongly for not including Churchill as a special area under the new legislation. Everyone who visits this location realizes that if there is an area in Canada which deserves consideration under this new program it is the townsite of Churchill. Among the things which have been asked for in recent years are the following: increased wheat exports from the port; a longer shipping season; increased port development; an extension of the period covered by marine and cargo insurance; increased ice-breaker assistance and additional grain galleries. All these things have been requested many times by representatives of the area and by interested groups in Saskatchewan and Alberta, as well as by officials and executives of the Hudson Bay Route Association. Most of the items I have mentioned are definitely a federal responsibility. Although the townsite is within the province of Manitoba, federal responsibility for its development has been recognized in the past as being in the neighbourhood of 75 per cent. In the last seven or eight years, however, very little, if anything, has been done. I should like to commend the government, however, on the measure which was undertaken last year to provide money for a partial sewer and water system for the townsite.

Several years ago, during an election campaign the present Minister of Public Works (Mr. Laing) was reported as saying on many occasions in Churchill that this was only a beginning, and that there would be much greater development in Churchill. Nothing has happened since then and there is no indi-