

Hon. ROBERT WEIR (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, in the remarks to which the hon. member refers, I was endeavouring to fix the responsibility for the weed menace in the Waterhen lake area. If the former Minister of Agriculture says he had no responsibility for that menace, I am willing to take his statement to that effect. If that is correct the only conclusion we can come to, is that his colleague, the former Minister of the Interior, knew him so well that he did not think it was worth while to ask his opinion concerning an agricultural project as great as that in the Waterhen lake area. There is no doubt in the mind of anybody who lives in that part of the country that the weed menace did develop during the administration of the previous government. That is what I have reference to.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: That is just some more bunk and rubbish, and has nothing to do with it. What has that got to do with it? How could the minister think that the Minister of the Interior could have had anything to do with it? Who began it? It was begun in 1919.

Mr. WEIR (Melfort): Who was responsible? I think we should compliment the former Minister of the Interior on—

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I gave the minister a chance to explain himself and he has messed himself from top to bottom in trying to do so.

I now come to the Minister of Railways—and at this time I do not know whether or not I will be allowed to quote. Why do you, Mr. Speaker, on this particular date, put a crimp in one—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. CAHAN: Order.

Mr. VALLANCE: Quote the whole of Hansard; get an old Hansard.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: Could I quote Hansard of past days?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Of past years.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I shall read the words of Mr. George Graham about Nelson as quoted by the minister. An attempt was made by the Minister of Railways and Canals to pass on the responsibility to Senator George Graham and the Liberal party for choosing Nelson as a harbour. There was no justification whatever for making such a statement. Here is what Mr. Graham said:

If the traffic is to assume any dimensions at all—and unless the department were satisfied it will, they would not go to the expense of having very costly terminal facilities there—if the traffic is to assume any proportions a good harbour is necessary, and from the information in the department the best harbour is to be found at Nelson—

Mark you, he said:

—the best harbour is to be found at Nelson.

That is where the Minister of Railways ceased quoting. He did not notice the following words however, or the following proviso:

“Provided the difficulty referred to is overcome.”

Why did the Minister of Railways stop when he came to a comma, when there was a full stop at which he might have stopped if he had quoted those seven additional very significant words which make Mr. Graham's answer entirely different from the way in which it was said.

Mr. VALLANCE: That is what he did it for.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: “Provided the difficulty referred to is overcome.” What was the difficulty? It was recited by the Hon. Mr. Oliver when he intimated that Nelson was an impossible port because there were no banks for shelter, that there was nothing but mud flats, and that the harbour had to be dredged but would not stay dredged. There were sand bars on the outer part of the harbour and in spring great cordons of ice would form and prevent ingress to or egress from it. After the harbour was opened it could not be used because of ice piled up sometimes twenty-five feet high. These are the difficulties which surrounded the selection of Nelson. The Hon. Mr. Dunning also intimated his preference for Nelson, if these difficulties could be overcome; we were all in favour of it, because of the possibility of a shorter rail haul. Here the significant points are omitted. Why? I am not permitted to quote the hon. gentleman's remarks and I do not know whether he will be allowed to quote them. I am quite prepared to give my permission, if Mr. Speaker will do likewise. I would discriminate in favour of the Minister of Railways so that he may hunt around and find words to describe his remarkable conduct. Probably he could set up an alibi, and blame it on some official in the department, as his leader has done on more than one occasion. We would accept that; an alibi of any kind is better than straight guilt. Here are the