

We have not heard from hon. members on the other side any argument to justify the building of this line at the present time. Let us consider for a moment the scheme of the government. We begin at the far east and work westward. The proposal, as to the east, calls for the building of a new line of railway from Moncton to Quebec. We already have a line covering that stretch of country, the Intercolonial Railway. The Intercolonial has cost us over \$70,000,000, and \$15,000,000 has been spent within the last seven years by the present government. This branch of the scheme has been so thoroughly and ably discussed by other hon. members that I am not going to take up any time by discussing it any further than to say that in my opinion this line from Quebec to Moncton is worse than unnecessary. It is not only unnecessary for us to build another line through the province of New Brunswick, but it would be disastrous to do so, because the effect would be to destroy the Intercolonial, which has already cost the Dominion something like seventy millions of dollars. Further, what estimate have we as to the expense of building this line of railway? The Intercolonial is built through, possibly the best section of the province of New Brunswick. If we look at the reports of Sir Sandford Fleming, made in connection with the Intercolonial some years ago, I think we cannot come to any other conclusion than that it will be almost impossible, taking grades and curves into consideration, to shorten the distance from Quebec to Moncton to any considerable extent.

The proposition is to lease this line, which will cost us some \$120,000,000 for a period, for the first seven years of which—practically, for the first ten years of which—the government will receive nothing, adding another \$6,000,000 to the burden laid upon the people, or a total for this portion of the line of \$26,000,000. The project looks next to making a trunk line from Quebec through the northern region to Winnipeg. The projected line from Quebec to Winnipeg is devised to carry western grain. But we have the evidence of men who are competent to judge, men like Sir William Van Horne and other great railroad authorities, to the effect that little gain can go over that road, seeing that it is much cheaper to carry grain by water or by water and rail than by rail exclusively. I do not think it requires very much common sense on the part of anybody to come to the conclusion that this road would be absolutely and utterly useless for the purpose of carrying grain.

We know that the Wolvins are carrying grain from Chicago to Quebec at three cents a bushel, and we know that grain is being carried from Port Arthur to Montreal at 3½ cents per bushel. How is it possible, then, to carry grain on this road at these figures? The Quebec-Winnipeg section duplicates several railways. It parallels the

Canadian Pacific Railway from North Bay to Fort William. We constantly hear from the other-side of the House the statement, in regard to the scheme of the leader of the opposition, that it would be inadvisable to purchase that portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway from Sudbury to Port Arthur because it goes through a perfectly barren country and is the poorest paying portion of the line. If that is the case, why should the government build another line of railway through that barren and poor section of the country? Is not the scheme of the leader of the opposition a better scheme—to acquire that portion from Sudbury to Port Arthur, and use it, as he expressed it, as a bridge from the east to the west?

I believe that the scheme propounded by the leader of the opposition, is most feasible, and that it is the best scheme for the solution of the transportation problems of the country. It will carry the Grand Trunk Railway to Winnipeg—we save here. It will offer an entrance to the Intercolonial Railway into Winnipeg—we save again in this. It gets the Canadian Northern that now runs from Port Arthur to Winnipeg into the east—we save again; for if that company seeks a line of its own we shall be asked to bonus it. While saving an enormous amount of money it carries four railways into the west, and gives the east four distinct connections in addition to the water route. By adopting the plan of the leader of the opposition, all the prairie roads have lines to the east at no expense to the country worth mentioning. It is admitted on all hands that we must spend money in the development of our water-ways. If we add a hundred million unnecessarily and unwisely to our obligation, we cannot provide the facilities for increasing the trade, improving the water-ways, deepening the harbours and equipping the Canadian seaports, nor shall we have the means to aid in the work of colonizing the enormous, and, as we believe valuable tracts of arable land in northern Ontario and northern Quebec. The policy of the leader of the opposition is a national policy in the true sense of the word. It looks to development. It proposes to build a greater and better Canada.

I have already said a word or two with regard to the resignation of the ex-Minister of Railways and Canals (Hon. Mr. Blair). That resignation is a protest against the proposed emasculating of the Intercolonial. I say that it would be as reasonable for the Canadian Pacific Railway to parallel their line to St. John, or the Grand Trunk to parallel their line to Portland, as for the government to parallel the Intercolonial from Lévis to Moncton.

Now Mr. Speaker, I believe that on this momentous question there should be an appeal to the people, and I think that that appeal should precede, and not follow, action by parliament which will commit the country to this enormous expenditure. The