

were bought and distributed along the line; yet here are the people of Montreal still going up to these regions by the hundreds and having to use the C.P.R. part of the way as far as St. Jerome so as to connect there with the C.N.R. branch line. It would be good policy and good business to build that line, in order that those 60 miles of railway could be linked up to the main line of the Canadian National railway for the purpose of providing a through route and a through rate between that region and Montreal. It seemed to me that that was a work that was commendable.

If there were before this House only a demand for the completion of that link in order to save the money invested in the roadbed and the cost of the ties, I would support it. That is the only part of the branch lines that I know personally.

The project is to vote an authorization for the construction of these branches on a plan to cover three years. I will not go into the details of the Bill, but I submit the proposition. It is said that those branches are absolutely necessary to serve the populations that are already there, and have been waiting for them for a considerable time. I know nothing personally of the absolute need of those various branches, but this program comes to us from the Canadian National Railway Board. This is the Bill we have before us. Will it make for the creation of feeders to our railways, and help to bring to them prosperity through increased population? It is for the honourable gentlemen who know most about those various lines in the West to express their views.

Hon. Mr. BEIQUE: May I ask if the Government has been furnished with information from the Board of National Railways as to the necessity for those railways?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I have in my hand a memorandum that comes from the Railway Board, and I quote from the Minister of Railways in another place the following words:

What I have submitted is the Canadian National board's programme, as handed to me, and which I think is a good thing for the railways and for the country generally. One of the reasons for this three-year programme being placed on the statutes is that the people may understand exactly what they are going to get for some time. It has been stated, and quite properly so, that the psychology of those who advocate a thing has a great deal to do with influencing its promotion. Many of these branch lines in the West are not new structures; very many miles of these lines have been graded, some of the grades having been constructed since the war, although the rails have not been laid down. There are some four hundred miles of grading already done, and all we propose to do is to

lay the rails. Surely, no one would suggest that it is bad business, if after investigation the previous board decided to build these lines, for the present board to complete the work. It will be a good investment for the company and for the country as well. If the committee will agree to my suggestion and let us get this matter embodied in a Bill I think it will expedite our business.

Hon. Mr. DAVID: Can the honourable leader of the House tell what the construction of those railways will cost?

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: A little more than half the cost of the Transcontinental.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: A little over \$28,000,000.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: For 1,000 miles.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: In view of the very weak plea the honourable leader has put up for the only road that he knows about, by stating that the 14 miles which are to be built will parallel the C. P. R.—

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: No.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: I understood you to say that.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: No; the main line of the Canadian National railway passes at a distance of 12 miles from the junction where the C. P. R. and the Canadian National Railway branch meet, and the idea is to link that Canadian National Railway branch with the main line. I simply mention this as an example of the necessity for those branches. That one I know, because I happened to see an imposing delegation six months ago explaining it to the member for Argenteuil, Hon. Mr. Stewart, and urging that that branch be completed, inasmuch as it was graded and the ties were on the ground.

Hon. W. B. ROSS: Has the honourable Minister a map of this road that he could lay on the Table?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Yes, the map is here and will be laid on the Table.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Both of those lines leave St. Jerome, and both come to Montreal, so they cannot be far from parallel.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: We cannot argue against the fact that they both run to Montreal, but that 60 miles of railway belonging to the Canadian National brings its freight and passengers to the C. P. R. near St. Jerome. If a small branch were built, it would enable those 60 miles to be linked with our own system, the Canadian National, so that it would have a through train for those 60 miles to Montreal, while, to-day the C. P. R. is being fed by that C. N. R. branch.