

as a member of the Government, must have thought, when he submitted this Bill, they all should be built. He gave one instance of a line that should be built, and that is a line of 12 miles in the province of Quebec.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: No, I gave an example, an illustration.

Hon. Mr. LYNCH-STAUTON: A sample.

Hon. Mr. REID: All right, a sample. Now, on what particular point this is the position of the railway situation. From St. Jerome to Montreal the C.P.R. has a direct line, and the Canadian National has also a through line, so that a passenger getting on at St. Jerome, no matter which road he uses, can go through to Montreal on that line, but to go on the Canadian National takes longer, for this reason. From St. Jerome to Terrebonne the roads practically parallel each other; then, at Terrebonne the Canadian National takes a longer circle and the route to Montreal is a number of miles longer; but passengers who want to go more quickly get on the Canadian National at St. Jerome or any station between there and Terrebonne and they just step off that on to the C.P.R. and arrive at Montreal at exactly the same time. Because of this, the honourable leader asks us to vote \$357,000 to build 12 miles of line to connect St. Jerome branch with the Transcontinental that runs into Montreal. I ask how any man can approve of an expenditure of that kind. The honourable leader has to admit that the Finance Minister in another place stated that this country would lose, \$70,000,000 or \$80,000,000 during the present year.

It is said that other lines mentioned in this Bill are urgent, and Sir Henry Thornton and his Board have approved of them. Well, I think the honourable leader knows more about them than Sir Henry Thornton. Twenty-five or thirty years ago, when I was a member of the House of Commons, the question was brought up of building a railway of about 67 miles in the constituency of Mr. Sinclair, who was then a member of Parliament, and is now a member of the railway directorate. It was prior to 1896, when Sir Wilfrid Laurier came in. An investigation was made by the railway officials of that day, and they reported against it. Instead of costing \$3,500,000, it would cost \$8,000,000 if my memory serves me rightly, and that was before the war, when railway work could be constructed for probably one-third of present cost. That was the position when the Conservative party was in power. When Sir Wilfrid Laurier came into power the road was going to be built, and during 16 years Mr. Sinclair appealed to Sir Wilfrid and his Government. There is a

stack of reports a foot high on that project, and while they wanted to let Mr. Sinclair down easily, there never was a report sufficiently strong to warrant undertaking the building of that road, when we had lots of money. I know that while I was Minister of Railways and Canals a deputation came up about it, but I never heard any officials of the Intercolonial Railway admit that they were justified in going to such an enormous expense to build that particular road.

We have here, to begin with, 67 miles of road, the construction which would cost some \$7,000,000 or \$8,000,000 at pre-war prices. That is only a sample. I do not say that applies to all these lines. Money has already been expended upon a number of these lines in the Northwest. Some of it was spent when I was Minister of Railways and Canals.

But let me tell you what this construction means. When the Canadian Northern Railway lines went into Saskatchewan and Alberta they went in as colonization roads. The company started building roads into the prairie probably 10 or 20 or 30 miles. They moved ahead of the population, and as the population grew they were justified in extending them. But remember, the extension helped to bring traffic of the kind needed by the railway to make it pay.

I have no hesitation in saying that I would not at any time refuse to extend lines along which the people had settled; and I am convinced that they would provide sufficient traffic and would justify the expenditure made upon them. If I remember correctly, nearly all the branch lines in Saskatchewan pay by reason of the grain carried over them.

The railways proposed under this Bill will probably not be constructed this year. Under the old system they would be half completed by this time and I will tell you why. Before the 31st of March, one-sixth of the total amount required, as shown in the Estimates, would be voted and passed by Parliament and sanctioned by the Governor General, and the money would be available for construction in the spring, which is the proper time of year to get the road ready for the wheat crop next fall. Even if this Bill is passed, the crops will be harvested before the road can be constructed.

There is perhaps a fear among honourable gentlemen from Alberta and Saskatchewan that if we do not pass this Bill the Government will not be able to proceed with the construction of railways. The honourable leader of the Government has stated that the expenditure of this money is to be extended over the next three years; the total amount, according to his estimate, being \$28,000,000.