

*Supply—Hudson Bay Railway*

anything at all into the estimates for the Hudson Bay railway. The hon. member for South Winnipeg assured us this afternoon that a wave of great regret would go over western Canada at the news that there was \$3,000,000 to be used on the Hudson Bay railway. I think I am as intimately acquainted with the people of western Canada as is my hon. friend. They are people of plain common sense and they know that you cannot build 92 miles of new railway on the end of an old one if you cannot get over the old one to the place where you want to start construction.

My hon. friend well knows that the present bi-monthly operation is only from Le Pas to mile 214; that the travel even for those 214 miles is not very safe and certainly would not be safe if the traffic were heavier. He knows perfectly well also that from mile 214 to mile 333 there has not been a train over the road for a number of years and that a train cannot pass over it. I have sufficient regard for the common sense of the people of western Canada to know that they will realize that until at least that stretch of 118 miles is put into shape it would be impossible to proceed to lay rails on the balance of the 92 miles.

During the period when the Conservative government and the Union government were building the Hudson Bay Railway there never was a year when they spent more than \$3,250,000 on that railroad; they found it impossible even at full blast to expend more than \$3,250,000 in one year. I am asking parliament for authority to spend \$3,000,000 this year, and the work is already proceeding on the basis of the interim supply that is granted. A large part of this \$3,000,000, as I indicated this afternoon, is required for the purpose of providing engine terminal facilities at the various divisional points along the existing road. My hon. friends opposite, when they built the railroad, made no provision for engine terminal facilities, for stations, for water tanks, for the necessary paraphernalia of operating a road. We intend to supply that deficiency. We do not think it is practical to try to operate 500 miles of railroad without the necessary railway engine terminal facilities and other things of that kind. The money is required for that purpose. What my hon. friend virtually proposes is this, that by some means unknown to mechanical science we should start at the end of the present steel and rush the work into Nelson regardless of the fact that trains could not travel over the existing steel in order to reach the new work. I would personally have been willing to put

[Mr. Dunning.]

into the estimates a larger sum, a sum sufficient to complete the 92 miles, were it not for the fact that it would be deceiving the people of Canada to say to them that it would be possible in one year to put the existing track into shape and at the same time to construct the additional 92 miles required. My hon. friend knows that just as well as I do.

I want to put on Hansard a little history in connection with this question in order that we may all be clear in regard to it. In 1886 the Dominion Lands Act provided for a grant of 6,400 acres for every mile of such railway in Manitoba and 12,800 acres for every mile of the railway beyond the boundary of Manitoba to the bay. In 1906 the construction of the branch from Hudson Bay junction to the Saskatchewan river was commenced by Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann. In 1907 the sale of pre-emptions was authorized by an amendment of the Dominion Lands Act to provide funds for the construction of a publicly-owned railroad to the bay. In 1908 the Canadian Northern was completed to Le Pas. Le Pas being the starting point of the Hudson Bay railway. The provisions for land grants to private railway companies were repealed in that year. The restriction of the pre-emption area was provided by legislation, together with a definite announcement that the sale of pre-emptions and purchased homesteads in the restricted area was to provide funds to enable the country to construct, or to pledge the credit of the country to construct, a railroad to Hudson bay. On the 6th September, 1910, the first sod of the sub-structure of the bridge across the Saskatchewan river at Le Pas was turned by the Minister of Railways, the Hon. Mr. Graham. In August, 1911, the contract for the first section of the Hudson Bay railway was let by the Laurier government.

Mr. ROGERS: That was a month before the election.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (South Oxford): When was the contract signed?

Mr. DUNNING: I have not the information with me—

Mr. SUTHERLAND (South Oxford): Two days after the defeat of the Liberal government they signed the contract.

Mr. DUNNING: The contract for the first section was signed by the Hon. Mr. Graham immediately after the election and before the Laurier government went out of power.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (South Oxford): After they were defeated.