

1911, but this line was dropped after 1911 with several of the others, and only one item in the programme was proceeded with, if I remember correctly. That is the history of this proposal, and I submit it to the House for favourable consideration.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I am going to ask my hon. friend to take particular care to let us have all the correspondence in connection with this line and all the reports the department now has. I am quite convinced that, if he will read them through, he will never ask the House to give it any further consideration. As the minister says, this is an old line. It is old although never built. It is old in the sense of the consideration that has been given it by politicians practically since confederation. I do not think there has ever been a local election fought in Nova Scotia, that this line has not been used one way or the other for the purpose of getting votes. There was a time when the local government undertook to build it, and ran through an election on the claim that they were going to build it. I forget whether that was once or twice. It happened at least once, and the local government being returned, of course did not build it. No one would ever build it. The only possible reason for building the line down there would be that referred to in Hansard of 1916 by the then Minister of Railways, the Hon. Mr. Cochrane. It was conclusively proved that the present main line had very bad grades; and if there were any way of helping those grades something would be gained. The whole idea was to help those grades. The Hon. Dr. Reid was concerned in it and, following as best I could what the minister said, I think he made exactly the same point, that the grades were bad and it would be a great thing if we could get better grades. That is not the present proposition. Even if that had been the present proposition, it is something which the country to-day unless we have all taken leave of our senses would never go into. It never would think of opening up a line of railway which will do nothing to overcome the admitted difficulties in connection with the main line grades? I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that there is no justification whatever for the building of this line, apart from political purposes.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): Is my hon. friend not aware that, in addition to the record of his own party and of ministers of railways between 1911 and 1917, the Can-

[Mr. Graham.]

adian National Railway board, when presided over by Mr. Hanna, recommended the construction of this road?

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: My hon. friend is entirely misinformed. Mr. Hanna's board turned down the proposal.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): I make the statement on the faith of communications to the public press made by Colonel Thomas Cantley, my opponent in Pictou county in the last election, who was a member of the board over which Mr. Hanna presided. I think his authority is as good as my hon. friend's.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I am quite content to take it that way, but my very strong recollection is that at the time that matter was discussed, and it was discussed more than once, Mr. Hanna took the strongest possible grounds against the proposal. At any rate, if he did not, he ought to have done so.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): They are all wrong but you.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: My hon. friend is pleased to be facetious.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): No, you are.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: My hon. friend knows very well that if this line is built it will never pay.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): I know nothing of the sort.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Then I do not think my hon. friend has studied the question.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): I know more about it than you do.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Of course it is a thing that comes up in connection with the exigencies of Nova Scotia politics from time to time.

Mr. MACDONALD (Pictou): Not at all.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: When the local government down there gets tired of this football; when it wins some elections by it and then refuses to go on and build the line, we have it transferred here just at the right time, just before the Dominion election—

Mr. GRAHAM: Oh no—a long way off.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: In 1911, not so very long before the Dominion election, for the purposes of Nova Scotia politics we have this old horse trotted out to serve for just another term. Of course the contracts were