

Canadian National Railways

go in there the Liberals do not have a candidate in that constituency.

Mr. Pickersgill: You needn't rub that in.

Mr. Knowles: The minister does not like me to remind him that his party's candidate did not file his papers, or forgot to be there. At any rate, for once the Minister of Transport is as pure as driven snow.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Why do you say for once?

Mr. Knowles: Seriously, I am glad to have this opportunity to draw attention to the tremendous resources of wealth in northern Manitoba and to express our support for the bill.

Mr. Cantelon: Mr. Chairman, as a Saskatchewan member I would like to contribute to this debate. In the first part of his speech the Leader of the Opposition clearly delineated the advantages that this branch line will bring to Saskatchewan, and of course I agree with him. But the construction of this branch line will give the railway system itself a great advantage that should be brought to the attention of the minister and everyone else. The \$4½ million yearly revenue that the railway will get will certainly help to change the profit picture of the C.N.R., but I did not hear the minister say whether the contract was for a specified time. Perhaps I missed that part of his speech.

I would like to point out that at present there is much talk about the construction of pipe lines to transport solids such as potash and sulphur. This scares me. It frightens me because such a development could practically ruin the advantage which the railways presently enjoy in Saskatchewan.

If such pipe lines are constructed the advantages which the railways are obtaining will be lost and they will be left in a most invidious position because of the extra expense they are being put to in undertaking the construction of these branch lines. Therefore I suggest that the government give the closest possible scrutiny to all suggestions concerning the construction of pipe lines in that area.

I may say I find this rather foreign to my own attitude toward scientific research. I am very much in favour of scientific research in every respect, but if pipe lines are put into operation the potash will be moved to the Chicago area, and once it starts going there in quantity the tremendous chemical products development which can clearly be foreseen in

Saskatchewan will be lost to the province. I would just like to give that word of warning.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I should like to assure the hon. gentleman that the contract is for 15 years, long enough to obviate the contingency he has suggested because it is a firm contract with a company that has a proven mine.

Mr. Howe (Wellington-Huron): Mr. Chairman, it would appear that there is unanimity about this bill. One thing it pinpoints is the importance of the railroads in transporting bulk material. This is something we must think about when considering railway line abandonment.

Further, in view of the remarks made by the hon. member for Kindersley I should like to point out that we seem to be adopting a new principle so far as railway bills are concerned. If I remember correctly, most bills of this type are sent to a standing committee where all those who wish can interrogate the minister and his officials and those promoting the railway line have an opportunity to give all the necessary information in connection with it. At committee hearings provincial governments can also make representations and so can competing railroads. I hope this practice will not be adopted with respect to all other bills of this type.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am very glad that the hon. gentleman made his intervention because what he said is very wise. Twice this session this procedure has been adopted because of the pressure of other business and because of the urgency of getting certain projects under way about which there seemed to be almost complete unanimity. But I can assure the hon. member I would not think of doing this in the case of a project about which there was controversy. Any such case should go to the standing committee and be thoroughly examined there. I speak for the government in saying that this is our view. It is only in exceptional circumstances, when a case seems so clearcut, that we would think of not referring such a bill to a committee.

Mr. Howe (Wellington-Huron): Did the minister intimate that the C.P.R. already has a branch line running into this particular area?

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes, that was indicated, and the mining company has agreed to divide its business 50-50 between them.