

*Edmonton, Dunvegan Railway*

Saint Cyr, Dominion land surveyor in 1909, as follows:

This township can be reached by a narrow belt of prairie south of the correction line, connecting with Spirit River prairie to the east, and then by Dunvegan wagon road. The township is thickly covered with poplar, spruce and large willow. Spirit River prairie ends at the east boundary. The country is rolling in the northern half of the township and undulating in the remainder. There is no prairie.

If there is no prairie it seems foolish to be extending the railway into that country, and that may account for the statement of the member for the provincial riding, that the proposed route has been criticized by many in the district. There are many more interesting things in these official township reports, which I shall read in a few minutes. But I want to compare the descriptions I have given with the description of the country adjacent to this proposed route where the people are asking for railway extension. I quote the following by way of contrast. As regards township 78, in range 6, now at the terminus of the existing railway and immediately adjoining the township just described, the following statement appears:

Spirit River, which is a very small stream, crosses the settlement from west to east. The soil is of good quality, being composed of a black loam resting on a sandy clay subsoil.

My hon. friend will agree that that describes good farming land worthy of being served, as it is served, by the present railway. The report goes on to say:

The surface is prairie and bluffs. The country is level with the exception of that portion of the settlement situated south of Spirit river. Wheat, oats and vegetables have been successfully raised there for a few years. The prairie furnishes good pasture. Every traveller who came there last summer appeared to like the country and to have great faith in the future of that district.

I, consider that a very good argument because the extension now proposed and which I have discussed was the very one from which I understand the Minister of the Interior (Mr. Stewart, Edmonton), when he was Prime Minister of Alberta, withdrew government support. As a matter of fact, townships 76, 77, 78, 79, 80 and 81 in ranges 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, all adjacent to the line proposed in clause (a), have not yet been surveyed and it would appear that if this were good country a survey would already have been made. So that those who are dissatisfied with this proposed line are probably justified in their attitude.

As regards clause (b) of this proposed charter, I think that great injustice is being done to the farmers in that part of Alberta

[Mr. Hepburn.]

by this provision. There is a railway running from Grande Prairie to Wembley, on a line differing materially from a route which was surveyed in 1911, I believe. On the strength of that survey hundreds of settlers went into that part of the country. If this proposed extension is persisted in, while I will not say that it will represent a breach of faith on the part of the government, I will point out that the railway will be circling what was once designated as the route, with the result that the farms in the vicinity of the original location will diminish in value. That is not a very fair proposition to the people of that part of Alberta, and in this connection I would refer the committee once more to the statement of the member of the legislature for that district, to the effect that the route of extension proposed in clause (b) of this bill has been criticized by many in the district.

I want to quote some further descriptions of the property. I am doing so for the information of hon. gentlemen opposite. I am not criticizing all of them, because some hon. gentlemen opposite are willing to co-operate in our effort to expedite progress in southern Ontario. But I feel that we from Ontario ought to take some interest in Alberta and for that reason I shall give to the committee some further descriptions.

Mr. KENNEDY: Will the hon. member quote one sentence I have uttered in connection with any of the bills in which he is interested with a view to blocking them?

Mr. HEPBURN: The hon. member's colleague behind him, the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Garland) has placed on the order paper six amendments which I am ready to read.

Mr. KENNEDY: Will the hon. member quote one sentence that I have uttered for the purpose of blocking any of these bills?

Mr. HEPBURN: I am referring to the hon. gentleman's colleague; they are close together. There is considerable collusion although they try to say they are politically independent of each other. There is just as much partisanship there as there is anywhere else.

Mr. JELLIFF: I am sitting almost directly behind the hon. member for Bow River, and I do not think my hon. friend can charge me and a number of my other colleagues with blocking any legislation in this house. In the interest of the people of Alberta, I consider it unreasonable for the hon. gentleman to pursue the course he is taking. It will not result in any advantage to him.