

*Supply—Hudson Bay Railway*

of the country—to \$3,373,000,000. Therefore, the conditions under which we are met today to consider the question of the completion of the Hudson Bay railway and terminals are very different from those with which this House was face to face in the year 1911 when the contract for the construction of the first section of this line was made. In 1911 we had a very considerable industrial and commercial activity in this country. We had had the national policy of safeguarding the interests of the country ratified time and again by the action of the Liberal party under the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Hon. W. S. Fielding. There was stability in tariff affairs and there was reliability with respect to the action of the government which had given confidence to those engaged in the industrial development of Canada from one end to the other. We were sanguine, and possibly too sanguine. On the eve of the election of 1911—if I remember the facts and I have quite a vivid memory—there was a great issue before the people of this country. But the representatives of the Liberal party, in their natural desire to secure the sympathetic support of the people of Manitoba and Saskatchewan and even Alberta, in that day, during that election campaign, promised that the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, if returned, would enter upon and prosecute in a practical and successful way the construction of a railway from The Pas, to which an extension had been completed by Mackenzie and Mann from their main Canadian Northern line, to Hudson bay. That government was defeated in the election, but before resigning office in August 1911 they entered into a contract with J. D. McArthur for the construction of the first 185 miles of line from The Pas to Thicket Portage, and upon that line there has subsequently been expended, for the 185 miles of road, the sum of \$2,300,000. But in that election of 1911 representatives of the Liberal Conservative party had also assured the electors of the middle west that if they were returned to power they would give sympathetic and practical support to the construction of the same line of railway, and there was, if I may say it without offence, a sort of competition between the propositions made by the leaders of the great parties in the contest. The first section of 185 miles having been partly completed in the year during which the work was carried on, in September 1912 the government of Sir Robert Borden, to show their sympathy with the aspirations of the people of the west,

[Mr. Cahan.]

entered into a contract for the extension of the line from Thicket Portage to Split Lake Junction, a distance of 68 miles, on which according to the returns, \$2,300,000 has been expended. Following that up, in the ensuing month, December 1912, the government of Sir Robert Borden made another contract for the final section from Split Lake Junction to Port Nelson a distance of 171 miles, on which up to the present time \$3,500,000 has been expended. No rails or ties were laid over the last 92 mile section to Port Nelson. Therefore, if both parties have striven for the favour of the electors of the middle west by making promises with regard to this railway construction, if both parties have expended millions of public money in carrying out the promises which they made and if the course which they pursued was commendable, both parties should receive equal approval with respect to the results. If, on the other hand, there was a premature attempt to open up that

3 p.m. line, if the project has not proved successful and is not likely to prove successful in the future, both parties must assume responsibility. In addition to these expenditures I mention, I find that The Pas bridge, built by the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, has cost \$300,000. The bridges at Manitou rapids and Kettle rapids together cost \$460,000; rails, fastenings, frogs and switches \$2,500,000; while other miscellaneous expenditures on the railway amounted to \$2,500,000; or in all, in round numbers, \$15,000,000 has been expended on that railway up to the present time. In addition there has been expended on the terminals at Port Nelson \$6,500,000 in round numbers. On the harbour terminals, as stated by the Minister of Railways, no work has been done since 1917, and the work upon the railway was closed at mile 332 in October 1918. In endeavouring to ascertain the reasons why this work was discontinued in 1917, I have examined the official documents so far as they are available, and I can only say to hon. members of this House who have not taken the trouble to peruse these documents, that if they will examine sessional papers No. 234 and No. 234A of 1924, which were brought down in the House in response to an order of the House, passed on April 14, 1924, they will find a body of information which is very informing indeed and which will prove useful to hon. members in coming to some practical decision upon the issue that is now before us. At page 16 of this return I find a report from Port Nelson dated December 22, 1917, by Mr. D. W. McLachlan, the engineer then resident at Port