

he at another; but in these days of rapid communication wonderful things can be accomplished. At any rate the communication having taken place and the announcement having been made, one would have thought that parliament might have been considered.

I read with some interest the debate which took place on this subject last year, and certainly you will not find within those pages, any indication that parliament left it to the Minister of Railways or the government to make an announcement of that character without at least bringing it to parliament. Although the statement was made, and the letter read as to what Mr. Palmer's instructions were, what he was to do, the fact is that most hon. members believed, as I did, that he was to make a report on the basis of which parliament could consider what action should be taken, rather than that it should be an executive act on the part of the government. However, the action has been taken, and the question whether it is well taken or otherwise will be determined not in our time but rather by posterity, and by that time I suppose neither the Minister of Railways nor any of us will be able to say how accurately Mr. Palmer guessed. But it is a singular comment on the institutions of the country that sixteen years after the selection has been made by two ministers, one a Liberal and the other a Conservative, one who visited the port and the other who did not, but relied upon the word of responsible engineers, their work should go for naught and all the moneys expended practically lost just because a tidal and estuarine engineer says he thinks the other port would be the better. I do think that that is not in consonance with sound economy and constitutional government as we have it in this country.

Again with respect to this Hudson Bay railway it is only fair to say that the very first speech I ever made in the old chamber was an appeal for the immediate construction of the railway, and I recall the circumstances under which the then minister went there for that purpose. There was a suggestion—and it is only right that I should say the Minister of Railways has intimated that the suggestion is rather the reporter's and not his—that political considerations governed with respect to the selection of the port. I refer to an interview in the Montreal Gazette. But my hon. friend has assured me that the inference drawn by the reporter there is only an inference.

Mr. DUNNING: The article says so.

Mr. BENNETT: I have it under my hand, and I do not think it says so.

[Mr. Bennett.]

Mr. DUNNING: I wish my hon. friend would read the article.

Mr. BENNETT: It is rather long.

Mr. DUNNING: Just the part relating to the inference.

Mr. BENNETT: If the page will go up to my room and bring me the newspaper I will satisfy my hon. friend.

Mr. DUNNING: If my hon. friend will permit me, the matter is of some importance because it relates to a very highly respected gentleman who is now dead.

Mr. BENNETT: That is just the reason I mentioned it.

Mr. DUNNING: And that is the reason I want the report correct.

Mr. BENNETT: I have it here:

The Minister of Railways had a brief chat with Premier King—

Mr. DUNNING: It is further on than that.

Mr. BENNETT: Yes, I have it here. My friend has looked it up since I spoke to him the other day.

Mr. DUNNING: Yes, that is right.

Mr. BENNETT (reading):

Mr. Dunning would not comment—

Mr. DUNNING: "Would not comment."

Mr. BENNETT (reading):

—on the costly blunder of the men responsible for the location of the terminus at Port Nelson,—

Mr. DUNNING: That is right.

Mr. BENNETT: There is only one inference. (Reading):

—where more than six million dollars has been expended since the inception of the Hudson Bay route. It is quite evident however that the decision to make Port Nelson the Hudson bay port was dictated by political rather than business motives.

That is the sentence, and it does not say that it is Mr. Dunning's or the reporter's.

Mr. DUNNING: Oh, no.

Mr. BENNETT: I go this far to say that when Sir Robert Borden saw that report he was so annoyed—I can go this far without violating any confidence—that he directed attention to the fact that during his official life he had never seen any minister whose regard for the public interest was so great as the late Frank Cochrane's, or one who was so willing to subordinate political considerations to the public weal. Because of that I