

Extension of Railway to Gaspé

financial endeavour I would say that it should be done not only on a sentimental basis but also on the ground of national importance. I emphasize that because such a course cannot be followed by parliament, by the government or even by the C.N.R. unless the matter is proven to be of national importance.

I should like to emphasize that point because I think it was overlooked. It is of course of national importance. It is of national importance on the basis of sentimental loyalty to this part of our country. No one should forget for a moment—and I hope no one does—that the Gaspé peninsula is the cradle of this continent. I think it should be done if only as a gesture of recognition for those who have pioneered in that area for so long a period of time and nearly starved to death. I think recognition should be granted to them in this way because it is the proper time and way to do it. It is the most vital thing that can be done to bring about proper communication in order to assist in the development of that particular part of the province of Quebec and Dominion of Canada.

The second reason why it is of national importance is that we must build up Canada from one end to the other. That is becoming more apparent every day. It should be done to strengthen national unity and in order to give this part of the country a break and the opportunity to develop its natural resources. The natural resources of that particular area, as has been demonstrated by my colleague, are of such great importance that they should be drawn to the attention of the membership of the house, and hon. members should realize that they will do no harm to anyone but on the contrary will do good to everyone by helping to develop that part of our country.

I do not want to emphasize any of the angles that have been so brilliantly expounded by my colleague. I believe it is not necessary to say much more to establish that the development of this region is of national importance, that the development of a railroad there is of national importance, and the same thing should be done for Gaspé, with its more brilliant prospects, as was done for Churchill.

Mr. Graydon: You will have to put the Conservative party in power to get that.

Mr. Martin: That is impossible.

Mr. Cote (Matapedia-Matane): This will not wait that long.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might add something to the two brilliant speeches that have just been delivered by the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Langlois) and the hon. member for Matapedia-Matane (Mr. Cote). At the

outset I should like to commend the hon. member for Gaspé for his brilliant advocacy of this resolution. This is not the first time he has placed a resolution of this nature on the order paper, and neither is it the first time that he has discussed at some length the merits of an extension of the railway along the north shore of the Gaspé coast. I commend him for the great confidence he has in his constituency, that part of the province of Quebec which is so dear to him. I should like also to thank the hon. member for Matapedia-Matane (Mr. Cote) for his contribution to the debate in both English and French. The resolution now before the house reads:

That, in the opinion of this house, early consideration should be given by the proper authorities as to the advisability of extending railway communications from Mont Joli, county of Rimouski, to the Gaspé peninsula via Matane—

I pause there for a moment, because on reaching this point anyone reading the resolution would immediately feel that it should be accepted, for the simple reason that there is now an extension of a line from Mont Joli to Matane, namely the Canada and Gulf Terminal. So on the strict interpretation of the resolution thus far I believe the house would have to accept it. But then it goes on to say:

—county of Matapedia-Matane, and Ste. Anne des Monts, county of Gaspé.

I take it what the hon. member really had in mind was the construction of a line from the present terminal at Matane to Ste. Anne des Monts; and on that point I think I should bring to the attention of the house two matters which I believe are of great importance in reference to railway construction. The Canadian National Railways, with which I am particularly associated and for which as a rule I speak in this parliament, approach projects of this nature from the standpoint of certain particular aspects. That is, before entering upon a project of this nature the Canadian National would want to know, for instance, whether the natural resources were such that the line would be a paying proposition; or, again, whether the density of traffic would be such that the line, if constructed, would be profitable. They also would like to know the cost of the project since there are lines which because of the terrain cost tremendous amounts of money, while others cost much less. As a rule the Canadian National looks upon new construction in a businesslike way, and when it can it likes to obtain some sort of guarantee that the minimum volume of traffic to be expected would justify consideration of the project.

What I have said heretofore deals with the attitude taken by the Canadian National