

the Hudson Bay route than by the long rail haul to Atlantic ports. By the Hudson Bay route the rail haul from the wheat fields of the Northwest would not average more than 600 miles against 1,800 miles to Atlantic ports. Independent entirely of the advantage that may be gained by the construction of that road in connection with navigation—because that is somewhat problematical—the government are justified in building the railway to Hudson bay to open up that territory.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—That is another question.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—Yes, but the subject under consideration is the building of the Hudson Bay railway. I say that, independent entirely of any trade that may go by the Hudson Bay route, the government are justified in opening up that immense territory. We had a committee of this House, some two or three years ago, looking into this subject, and I think the evidence they adduced went to show that the territory lying north of Manitoba and east of Hudson bay is capable of maintaining a very large population. There is land suitable for grain growing and stock raising. In addition to that, from the experience in other parts of Canada of opening up new territory, particularly the territory opened up by the Ontario government, we have reason to believe that valuable minerals may be discovered on account of building the railway. If the Ontario government had not built the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario railway, Cobalt would not be known to-day, because the geologists said that silver could not be there, and if it should be found it should not be there. The result of the construction of that railway is that hundreds of millions in wealth have been taken from that country since the building of the railway.

Rt. Hon. Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—Wealth which should not have been there.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—But it was there. I have no doubt that great mineral wealth will be discovered in the country north of Manitoba. I believe that the mineral belt in which Cobalt is extends in a

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north-westerly direction and in fact it has been traced to Split lake. The late government were perfectly justified in undertaking the construction of the Hudson Bay railway. The Hudson Bay route has been a very live matter in Manitoba for the last thirty years, and the Manitoba people were very much pleased when the late government decided to undertake the construction of that railway. I may say they were very much disappointed when the present government stopped the construction of it for a few months and glad when they finally came to the conclusion that they had better proceed with the construction. Independent of the doubt that may be entertained by some hon. gentlemen with regard to the possibilities of navigating Hudson bay, the government of the country are justified in opening up the Hudson Bay route.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—It may be quite possible that between some point in the Northwest and Hudson bay there is a territory which justifies the construction of a railway. If such is the case I, for one, would find no fault with the project, but in so far as our transportation is concerned it is a very serious matter for this country in view of the fact that we have one transcontinental railway in existence and two others approaching completion, and when they are completed they will carry, without difficulty, a far greater amount of grain than will find a market in Great Britain for all time to come. There is no question at all about that. I have some little knowledge of the subject from having examined the situation on my own account and I know that the northern country between the height of land and James bay is valueless for any purpose whatever, agriculture or anything else. When you get east of Lake Abitibi the country is absolutely valueless except a small portion in the province of Quebec. Coming again to the Hudson Bay route and another projected waterway, the Georgian Bay canal, I am in a position to know something of both, and I say without hesitation that if ever there were two unjustifiable schemes thought of in the best interests of Canada, it is the opening up