

look forward to the development of these great resources.

Speaking on this subject last year I expressed myself as somewhat doubtful if the proper selection had been made of the port, but since that time I have convinced myself that the port of Nelson will supply all the necessary requirements of a shipping port. I was confirmed in this view by a conversation which I had with a gentleman who was in charge of the machinery for several years while working at the bay. This man informed me that there would be ample room and ample protection for the shipping there and for the ships which would lie at the harbour. The harbour was being constructed alongside the main channel, and he said that it would be a crime to abandon the work which had already been done, and which was still standing up well. Consequently I am convinced that the government should carry on the work which has been in progress there. As I pointed out before, there is 80-pound steel on the road, and the grade is four-tenths.

To sum up, I would just like to say that this project has been found feasible after repeated investigations, and nothing has ever transpired to prove it otherwise. The people of the prairies claim the completion of this road as their right and as a national enterprise. Money was provided for it by the sale of lands in the West especially set aside for that purpose. We believe there is no great opposition to the road except possibly among a few doubting Thomases and those who may be directly interested. Conditions demand that if we can get a shorter and a cheaper route to the European markets we must take advantage of it, and this fact is all the more emphasized since the tariff barrier has been increased between us and the United States market. We believe that with an increase in the British preference, coupled with this shorter and cheaper route, much of the handicap imposed upon us by the American tariff would disappear, and that a better, brighter day would dawn for the western provinces and incidentally for the whole of Canada.

Mr. T. W. BIRD (Nelson): It is usual for the opponents of the Hudson Bay railway to magnify the usual difficulties of the engineer and the navigator into insuperable obstacles. I am reminded of an incident which occurred during the original survey of the railway. The engineers came to a soft place that required considerable filling. Of course, the engineers took it as part of their ordinary day's work, but a certain eastern journal, which I think is still hostile to the project, immediately announced that the engineers

had come to a standstill before a bottomless bog. The matter was taken up in this House, and it was found that the bottomless bog had no existence except in the mind of the editor of that journal.

Before I go on to deal with the feasibility of the route, which I think is a very important, in fact, a crucial matter, I want to say a few words as to the question of expediency as it has been applied to this matter. We of the West, Mr. Speaker, have sometimes had an uneasy feeling that we have been bamboozled by this plea of expediency. Up to 1917 it was thought expedient by two successive governments which to all appearances entered upon this enterprise with the feeling that they were doing so in the national interest—up to that time I say two successive governments spent over \$20,000,000 upon the enterprise. Then suddenly in 1918 it was thought expedient to close down the whole thing, and from that time onward it was thought expedient to neglect the work done, to allow it to deteriorate and decay; and to crown everything, it was found expedient last fall to add human devices of demolition to those of nature, and to make an attempt to blot the whole thing out of the remembrance of man. During all that time yearly expenditures were made, amounting to tens of millions of dollars, upon other projects which had not one whit more claim than the Hudson Bay railway had. One is disposed to exclaim: "Oh expediency what wrongs have been committed in thy name!" and we of the West feel that there is a good deal of explanation to be made on that score. So much for the plea for expediency.

What has been the actual condition in regard to this matter financially? The hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Knox) has referred to this. The impression that the construction of the Hudson Bay railway up to date has run the country into a debt of something like twenty millions, with enormous interest charges, is, of course, totally false. I think it is well understood in the House here, that every cent that went into construction was paid out of current revenue, and that current revenue was amply reimbursed by the provision which the hon. member (Mr. Knox) has referred to—that is the setting aside of certain lands, certain homesteads and preemptions. So the plea of economy can only apply to the small amount it would have taken to complete the route; and I think it can scarcely be denied that four or five millions, or six millions, would have been ample to have placed the Hudson bay route in a condition that would have allowed of an operation of at least an experimental kind.