

*Vancouver Harbour*

mated earnings of the port after the projected expenditures are completed. Is it possible to make any estimate, or have the officers of the department made any? I suppose it is quite possible that the very things that have happened in the East can well happen on the Pacific coast. Persons resident in Vancouver may have a very vivid imagination of port developments that are not very likely to materialize in the early future, and I think the minister should be extremely careful, before authorizing these expenditures, to ascertain that there is a reasonable certainty of interest being earned upon the loan.

Mr. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Chairman, I must say that I do not find myself in opposition to this proposed loan, although I cannot say that I am heartily in sympathy with the method of raising the money. Possibly it is safe enough for the government to advance five million dollars to the Vancouver harbour commissioners, presuming that they are a responsible body and that the money will be repaid. But, in addition to what the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Maclean) has said, it seems to me that there needs to be a reorganization of the Vancouver harbour commissioners so that we may be reasonably sure of a continuous development of the harbour. I do not speak in this way with the idea of opposing the loan, because I happen to come from a section of the country that will benefit very materially from the development of the Vancouver route. I live in the centre prairie province, Saskatchewan, which is the greatest wheat producing province in the Dominion. In 1921 we produced over two hundred million bushels of wheat, and I am not sure but that our 1922 crop exceeded that figure. I live in Kindersley, about forty miles east of the eastern boundary of Alberta, and during the past year a great deal of grain grown in the vicinity has been shipped via Vancouver. We might wonder why that is the case. Our trouble on the prairies is, not that we cannot grow grain, not that the land is not good enough to grow grain, not that the people out there have not faith in their country; we have faith in our country, we know we can produce the grain, but what we are up against is inadequate transportation facilities—these are not as good as they should be. Heretofore the bulk of our grain has been going via Fort William and Montreal to the European market. That route is fairly well established, but it is only a summer route; at least in the winter time not a very large amount of our grain can be moved. And it cannot be moved very cheaply by that route. It so happens that from where I reside

[Mr. A. K. Maclean.]

we can ship grain westward and save considerable money. From Kindersley to Vancouver the rate is 17 2-5 cents per bushel, from Vancouver to Liverpool 22 cents, making a total charge of 39 2-5 cents per bushel. Now take the rate the other way. From Kindersley to Fort William the rate is 15 3-5 cents per bushel, from Fort William to Montreal by water 20 cents, by rail 21 cents—we will take the cheaper rate—from Montreal to the European market 12 cents per bushel; making a total of 47 3-5 cents per bushel. The difference represents a saving of 8 1-5 cents for every bushel of grain shipped from Kindersley via Vancouver. Is it any wonder that the farmers of western Saskatchewan prefer to ship their grain via Vancouver? During the past season a great many cars were shipped from my home town and from towns immediately west.

I have no doubt as to the future of the Vancouver route, if the harbour commissioners there are as energetic as the harbour commissioners of Montreal, for instance. There is just a query in my mind—and possibly in the course of the debate it will be answered—as to why, seeing that the Panama canal was completed in 1915, it has taken seven years for the Vancouver people to have sufficient faith in their harbour to make agitation for its development. Possibly they are beginning to become progressive in their ideas. If such is the case, Mr. Chairman, within another seven years we may hope to see progressive representatives from Vancouver.

Mr. STEVENS: May I interrupt my hon. friend? The elevator to which I referred a few moments ago has been constructed and standing in Vancouver since 1914.

Mr. ROBB: Since 1916.

Mr. STEVENS: It was completed in 1916. I explained a few moments ago the reasons why grain did not move that way at an earlier date. First, there was no surety that the route would be a successful one; secondly, the Panama canal was blocked for a year and a half; thirdly, there was no tonnage available on the Pacific until about eighteen months after the conclusion of the war. My hon. friend will remember, if he reflects a moment, that for over a year after the war, until August 1920, tonnage was fully occupied on the short Atlantic route bringing troops back. In 1920 we started to ship wheat or grain through the Vancouver route. In 1921 more grain was flowing that way than we could handle because of the lack of facilities, the elevator being used to capacity. And the same condition obtained last year.