

own. I have supported the proposal of the Peace River outlet from my first connection with this house in 1926. I also supported it in 1932, and in refreshing my memory on the debate of that year I found such an excellent speech delivered by myself at that time that I was very strongly tempted to bring Hansard to the house and read the same speech on this occasion. I do not know whether the rules of the house would permit that or not, but I find it very difficult to amplify to any great extent what I then said.

The people of the Peace River are entitled to this concession; entitled to it for a great many reasons. One reason is the size and wealth of the area which they occupy, in veritable truth a new empire in the north. They are entitled to it by reason of the rapid growth of the population of that district and the very considerable numbers to which that population has now grown. They are entitled to it above all by reason of the unambiguous and unequivocal pledges that have been made by both parties in this house, the right hon. leader of the opposition having taken the Peace River outlet as the spearhead, whatever that means, of his policy; so fine a spearhead that when you come to see what has been done you cannot find it at all. It is like a point in Euclid—has no parts and no magnitude. We have been twitted with the fact that since this government came into power nothing has been done in the direction of a Peace River outlet. Of course everyone knows the conditions through which the country has been going and the financial and economic stress and strain and burden that has been imposed upon the government, rendering it absolutely impossible for any government, however strong its wish might be, to implement so important a promise as the construction of a Peace River outlet. But nothing is said by hon. gentlemen opposite of the years of office of the right hon. leader of the opposition when, notwithstanding his unequivocal promise, absolutely no step in this direction was taken.

It has now been suggested that we should rather encourage a rival policy to the Peace River outlet in the construction of branch lines feeding the country and connecting the outlying districts with the existing Alberta railway. I cannot say that I agree to that. I think our settlement policy was wrong from the beginning. I think the settlement policy of this country should have been as far as possible to confine settlement to the immediate neighbourhood of the railways or where railways were projected and intended to be

[Mr. Bury.]

constructed. That policy, however, was not pursued. I understand it is one of the major principles of the settlement policy of the present Alberta government, that the principle to be followed by that government is to circumscribe settlement so far as possible and keep it from going too far away from existing or projected railway lines. That is a policy that should have been instituted and rigorously observed from the very commencement. But now we have to deal with an accomplished fact, a condition that has come into existence, and it is impossible to wait for an outlet until connecting branches of railway have ramified into the far distant parts of that great territory. Moreover if any settlement is to be encouraged it can only be by making it profitable, and it can only be made profitable by providing an outlet to the Pacific coast. Where that outlet shall come is a matter entirely for engineers, I am not going to deal with that question. I wish merely to say that my whole and hearty support is given to the motion of the hon. member for Peace River, though I am quite aware and keenly alive to the present financial and economic conditions in Canada, and the other great burdens resting upon the government. I very much feel on that account that any action which can be taken certainly could not be taken this year.

Hon. R. J. MANION (Minister of Railways and Canals): Mr. Speaker, for an hour and a half I have listened to a very interesting debate on the question of a railway to connect the Peace River section with the Pacific ocean. At once I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Kennedy) and the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. Fraser) both of whom are directly interested in this question, on the consistence and persistence with which they have brought it before the house during many years past. The other day I made it my business to check up on the number of speeches made by the hon. member for Peace River in regard to this matter, and I find that from the years 1922 to 1934, inclusive, he has made at least one speech a year. This, therefore, is his thirteenth annual pilgrimage to the shrine, and I hope it will meet at least with as good luck as did the others. The number thirteen is supposed to be unlucky, but on this occasion I hope we shall be as generous in our promises as we have been in other years.

I might express a further opinion, sir, that the addresses delivered this afternoon from all sides of the house and all sections of the country have been, with one exception—and