

further to add. I do not intend to take part in the discussion unless I can contribute something of value. I simply rose for the purpose of saying that we are quite serious in advocating that no money should be expended unless that expenditure is absolutely needed.

Mr. MARLER: Just one word. I wish to make my position abundantly clear to this committee, particularly to the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. McBride). It is not a question as to whether a line is being built in Nova Scotia, or in New Brunswick or in Quebec, or any other province whatsoever. I was not directing criticism to lines in British Columbia any more than I am directing criticism to lines in any other province. I stated on Tuesday that where a line is essential and vital then, and only then, should we spend money, and to that extent I am prepared to give my support. That I repeat again in the House to-night. My right hon. friend, the leader of the opposition, has told us that he knew this country and no doubt the member for Yale (Mr. MacKelvie) knows this country; the other members from British Columbia are equally well informed. I do not doubt that for a single moment. But I have not favoured lines in Quebec, I think those lines are certainly not necessary in so far as my own personal knowledge goes, but what I say, what I urge upon the government, is that when the time arrives—if the time does arrive—that we should have first-hand information from the necessary engineers and the necessary officers of the Canadian National railways; that we shall meet these gentlemen face to face, question them on the subject, find out for ourselves at first hand the necessity for these lines, whether they are to serve the population, and whether or not they should be built. That is the information I am going to urge, when the proper time comes, should be submitted in some manner or form before these bills go through.

Mr. MALCOLM: I have to disagree with the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George. He is not basing the construction of this line upon a business basis. He seems to argue that the only line that should be built is one that is essential and vital, and he assumes that because the Okanagan valley is somewhat served by the Canadian Pacific railway the territory should be left entirely to that system.

Mr. MARLER: Not at all, I made no such statement. My hon. friend is misquoting me entirely.

Mr. MALCOLM: If I err at all it is in misinterpreting my hon. friend.

[Mr. Forke.]

Mr. MARLER: Do not misinterpret me then.

Mr. MALCOLM: As custodians of the National system we have a perfect right to spend money from a business point of view to build branches that will serve as feeders to the National system. As an Ontario man who has some knowledge, by having travelled through that portion of British Columbia, of the possibilities of the Okanagan valley, I am neither strongly for this enterprise nor prejudiced against it. I treat it purely as a business proposition. This territory, as I know and as has been so well said by the members for the district, is considerably west of the line of rail and water served by the Canadian Pacific Railway. The proposed line will furnish transportation facilities to the more easterly portion of the Okanagan territory, and from a purely business standpoint I believe the National Railway system is perfectly wise in constructing this branch. It will not only serve the agricultural and fruit growing interests but will open up a promising mineral country besides. It is absolutely a good business proposition. Having said this, however, I must express my disappointment that a resolution has not been introduced providing for what would be one of the best lines from a business point of view, that could be constructed in the Dominion. That is a line from Grande Prairie to the National railway at Brule, which will open up a fine coal area and serve to promote settlement in the Peace river valley. I am not at all opposed to building such lines as business propositions. I do not think that as custodians of the National Railway system we should confine ourselves to lines that are absolutely essential. I think we could assist the management of the National lines in providing feeders which will furnish business to the main system.

Mr. GRAHAM: I should like to take up a minute or two in replying to some things that have been said. The government has been criticized to-day for not giving greater or more detailed information. I will make the assertion that there never was any more information given the House concerning the construction of branch lines than has been given to-day. There never was previously, so far as I can ascertain, a statement signed by the head of the Canadian National Railway system placed on the Table. But I want to go further. There is nothing to hide. We want to give parliament every information possible. Now the reason there is more detailed information available in the case of this line is that people have been all through