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SPEECH BY SIR RICHARD McBRIDE

IN MOVING THE SECOND READING
OF

The Pacific Great Eastern Bill

Mr. Speaker, in rising to move the second reading of the bill now before Parliament, I desire to make a few brief explanations, first respecting the new mileage proposed to be aided, and next in regard to the additional guarantee to be provided for the first section of the road between North Vancouver and Fort George.

Had I been in a position two years ago to anticipate the increased cost of construction as well as the money stringency, I might have been able to advise Parliament better with regard to the guarantee first arranged. Failing that, however, and counting upon a continuance of normal conditions, the bill as enacted two years ago was the best under the circumstances the Provincial Government could submit.

I am fortunate in being able to say that, despite the unlooked for conditions, the company behind this project has been most active in its operations and that no time has been lost in proceeding with the business of construction in a most substantial way.

The route of the Pacific Great Eastern is one which for years past has been the subject of a great deal of investigation as well as considerable controversy. Several charters have been issued for standard gauge railways through the section of country presently to be traversed by this line. Honourable gentlemen may recall, with little or no difficulty, the fact that not only Federal but Provincial charters have been issued for the past twenty-five years bearing upon a section of British Columbia that will be opened up by the construction of the Pacific Great Eastern. But it was not until a

local syndicate, the Howe Sound & Pemberton Meadows Railway Company, commenced the construction of a small mileage some five years ago that the subject of railway building to the Interior from Vancouver by way of Squamish became a live issue. Then it was through the influence and courage exhibited by some prominent Vancouver people that a considerable expenditure of money was made upon construction from the head of Howe Sound towards the Interior in the building of a small mileage of standard gauge track. After the construction had proceeded a few miles, two branch lines were built to accelerate the lumber industry in the district, but with the exception of these works nothing more was carried out.

We found, as a Government, when we approached the project involved in the Pacific Great Eastern that there were many and difficult complications ahead because of the numerous Federal and Provincial charters outstanding. There was the Vancouver, Westminster & Yukon charters, which carried with it the Federal subvention for a mileage of upwards of 150 miles with surveys through to Fort George. There was also the Howe Sound & Pemberton Meadows Company, and other corporations as well, seeking rights and charters for the same ground.

There was no intention on the part of the Province to injure any legitimate investments made in railway construction in this portion of the country, but there was always the determination on the part of the Government that from the moment we might attack the enterprise we should