

—because I appreciated the difficulty of the situation—when the hon. Minister of Justice referred to the Supreme Court of Canada for its opinion the question I have just mentioned. That opinion having been un-animously given, I thought, and still think, that it was the bounden duty of this government without a moment's delay to give effect to the aspirations of the province of Alberta, with which province five years ago they had such sympathy. It is idle to disguise the fact that this long delay has created the most unfavourable opinion with respect to the whole situation, and nothing will remedy the matter more quickly and bring about that unity of thought and action so much desired in this country as to give effect to that opinion at once. But further; suppose the Minister of Justice had succeeded in getting to the Privy Council, what should we have had? Lord Chancellor Loreburn said that the answers given to such questions are not binding in litigation and have no greater value than the opinion of the law officers of the crown. We have the opinion of the law officers of the crown; we now have the opinion of the Supreme Court of Canada, which is no better, according to the Privy Council, than that of the law officers of the crown; then why should we delay? That is the question the people of the west are asking this house. It is a question which is highly relevant and should be answered without further delay.

With respect to this interprovincial conference I find that the railways were also discussed in this connection. Now, is parliament to be treated in this way? Is parliament not to be told what the discussions were? Are we to have no idea what they were until legislation is introduced by which we will have to pay \$14,000,000 or \$15,000,000 for railways in British Columbia? Is that the way the matter is to be treated? I recall how the Minister of Justice before 1921 used the strongest terms—terms I would not use now in my amiable frame of mind; terms so strong, so emphatic, so embittered that I should not think a peaceful man like the Minister of Justice could use them. We now find that these railway problems are being considered by the cabinet, but we are not told whether the Pacific Great Eastern is to be taken over, or what is to be done in regard to the Edmonton and Dunvegan railway. These matters are not discussed, and my hon. friend has stated that he had not time to discuss them, although he was present at the conference.

Then there is another matter that illustrates the attitude of the government towards parliament. Speaking of the Hudson Bay railway, we were told last year that an eminent engineer was to consider the tidal and estuarial conditions at the port, but no statement was made as to whether he thought Fort Churchill was a better port than Port Nelson or that without regard to parliament the change would be made. When the matter first came up for consideration in this house the government of the day was led by Mr. Borden, now Sir Robert Borden. On that occasion Mr. Graham made this statement in the house:

I will admit this; that I think the necessity of the construction of a much longer line of railway to Churchill may have had considerable influence in the selection of Nelson. But just at the time the selection was under discussion, or practically had been made, the government changed, much to the detriment of the country, and my successor was neither satisfied with the contract nor with the port of Nelson; so he stopped the contract, and stated he would see whether there was anything wrong with it. Then he made a trip to Nelson himself, and came back enthusiastic about that being the proper port. I refer to the late Mr. Cochrane. I do not pretend to be practical myself, and I simply based my selection on the information given by the engineers at that time. This was confirmed by my successor in office, Mr. Cochrane, but, as I said before, it is possible the shorter mileage of railway construction might have had something to do with the selection of Nelson...

It is not a question of the respective merits of Port Nelson and Fort Churchill that I desire to draw attention to at this point, but rather the fact that in 1911, before the Laurier administration left office, Mr. Graham, as a result of perusal of the reports of his engineers, had fixed upon Nelson. That was sixteen years ago last fall, and now, on the sayso of one eminent gentleman, the terminus is changed to Churchill, several more miles of railway are to be constructed and \$6,000,000 that have been spent are to be lost, or practically lost. But the most important part of it is this: that a minister of the crown announces that by radio, without reference either to council or parliament—

Mr. DUNNING: No.

Mr. BENNETT: Does the minister say he discussed it with his colleagues before he made the announcement? Is that the statement?

Mr. DUNNING: Yes.

Mr. BENNETT: My hon. friend announced it by radio, then, not on his own behalf alone but on behalf of himself and his colleagues, although his colleagues were at one place and