

Hudson Bay Railway

we believe the road will prove a failure or success is beside the question. The whole matter may be concentrated into the statement that the West wants the Hudson Bay Railway and will never be satisfied until it gets it. Give them what they want. It will not break Canada, the few millions that are required, and it will do more to remove western suspicions of eastern motives than anything else in the world.

If this only were the result it would be worth far more than all the completion of the road will cost. The eastern provinces can form no conception of how fierce is the demand of the west for the Hudson Bay Railway. That road must be completed and an appropriation of the necessary funds for that purpose should be made at the forthcoming session of parliament.

Mr. MANION: If I may interrupt my hon. friend for a moment—I do not wish him to think that I am opposing the completion of this railway; I was merely trying to elucidate the point regarding comparative distances.

Mr. KNOX: I quite understand that, Mr. Speaker, I also have a short quotation from an Old Country paper, the *Monthly Trade Review* of London. This appeared in its issue of November, 1917—not of recent date, it is true, but it is interesting as indicating the view taken in England:

At the moment, when the Canadian government is pressing forward the completion of the new railway from The Pas to Port Nelson on Hudson's bay as a new outlet for the gigantic wheat fields of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, it is opportune to focus attention on an undertaking which will need every encouragement and support from the home government.

Canada's prairies to-day are the crucible of the nations, the imperial granary, the nearest and most prolific wheat-producing areas of the empire. What, therefore, can be done to ensure that they shall be developed for enormously increased supplies remunerative to the Canadian farmer and making the Briton's bread at home secure and more reasonable in price?

The most direct and practical answer is, develop transportation—transportation on the railways and lakes of Canada and transportation from Dominion ports to the ports of the United Kingdom. The completion of the state railway from The Pas to Port Nelson on Hudson bay and the establishment of a line of grain-carrying and other ships by the Hudson strait route is the beginning, therefore, of a movement of enormous importance, both to Canada and to the United Kingdom.

It is evident from this, Mr. Speaker, that the people of the Old Land are not unmindful of the importance of the wheat-growing provinces of the Dominion and realize that they are within much easier reach of tide-water and much nearer the Old Land than the present route would suggest.

A few days ago the hon. member for Saskatoon (Mr. Evans) instanced the cost of transporting a steer from Saskatoon to Liverpool—\$51 and some cents. Since then I have been making a little investigation, and I find that the portion of that amount which would be attributable to the rail haul from Saska-

[Mr. Knox.]

toon to Montreal would be something like \$18. Applying that to the rail haul from Saskatoon to Nelson, at the same rate there would be a saving of something like \$12. But that is not all. The shrinkage on such a rail haul amounts to at least five per cent. The average shrinkage between Winnipeg and Montreal is between three and five per cent, and the longer the haul the greater the shrinkage. The shrinkage, therefore, between Saskatoon to Montreal is easily five per cent. Now, five per cent is a very important item in connection with the price which the farmer would receive, and adding that to the saving on the rail haul which I have just mentioned, we can easily see that there would be a great saving if we could cut off something like twelve or thirteen hundred miles of rail haul. If we could save only \$10 per head on these cattle to the farmer who produced them, I want to emphasize that that would mean the difference between success and failure to the stock industry of the West to-day. We in the West have been urged to go into mixed farming; it has been said that we cannot possibly succeed by continuing with grain alone. Now that the embargo has been lifted I see a great opportunity for bringing the stock industry into something like the condition we had some years ago, but unless something of this nature can be done the stock industry is doomed in the West. I have no hesitation in saying that, and I have a right to know because I am interested along that line myself.

Along with the shipment of our beef, we have also our dairy products, and a number of other products which will benefit very, very largely if we can make this route work out as we believe it will work out.

There is one other point I would like to make, and it is this. The Ontario government at the present time is projecting a line of railway to the southern extremity of James bay. We in the West are determinedly looking forward to the completion of the Hudson bay lines, thereby giving us connection with that great Canadian sea at the other side. When these are both accomplished facts, we shall have something more in common with the East, and I believe that is urgently needed at the present time. We also look forward to the development of great natural resources in that country, a development which I believe would justify the completion of the road even if the route to the Old Country was never opened up. The resources of that north country are something wonderful. We have assurances of that from every man who has gone up there, and we