

I have said before, and I am quite willing to agree now, that if, since the outbreak of the war, it had been the policy of Canada to restrict all public works expenditures with a view of concentrating her financial strength in carrying the burden of the war, it would have been quite proper, and I do not think there is a man in Western Canada who would not have agreed that all work on the Hudson Bay railway, although even at that time a very considerable expenditure had been made and considerable progress had occurred, should be abandoned. But that was not the policy of the Government of that day and it was not the policy of Parliament; expenditures on an enormous scale were going on in various parts of the country, and the Hudson Bay railroad was dealt with as were other enterprises, and progress, while it may have been slackened, was not stopped. We must all take some measure of the responsibility for that condition. We can all agree now that it was unfortunate in the interests of the country that that attitude was preserved by the country. But it was preserved and progress has continued on that work as it has on other great works then in hand, with the result that to-day the Hudson Bay road of 425 miles is completed with the exception of 90 miles, and on that 90 miles, I understand, the grading has been done. I submit that under those circumstances it would be a misfortune if, after having completed nearly 350 miles of this railroad, including the two great bridges across the Nelson river which are very costly, and having completed the grading to Hudson bay, and having also spent \$5,000,000 in port development, we should now stop work for the sake of the cost of laying the rails on that 90 miles of already graded track. I understand that the rails are already purchased. Therefore there seems to me to be no possible reason why the work should not be continued to completion until the rails reach the bay, at which time the expenditures made on the port will be available for use.

I shall, of course, have to agree that under present conditions and with the shortage of shipping even to meet the needs of the present Atlantic ports, we cannot expect that the completion of the railway to Port Nelson will give us the traffic by way of Hudson bay that we expected when we entered upon the enterprise and what we would have if shipping conditions were normal, as we hope they will be some day in the future. To that

extent the arguments of my hon. friends are good. But let me deal with this other phase of the matter. There are 90 miles of track to be laid in order to bring the waters of Hudson bay into close touch with the prairie West. There is no question that there are possibilities of development in Hudson bay, in the matter of fisheries and of mineral development along the shores of the bay, so great that it would be in my mind a crime against Canada if, being within a step of the possibility of realizing on those resources at this particular time, we should fail to take that step which is merely, as I understand it, laying the rails on the 90 miles of graded track. This is a feature of the case of which I think everybody should take cognizance. We could not afford to build 425 miles of railway for the purpose of reaching the resources of the Hudson bay. It would never do to build that road as a local road. But, being within 90 miles of completion, we would be falling very short of our duty if we did not complete it so as to have the advantage of those local resources; the advantage of the road as a local road. But, further than that, not until the rails reach the bay can the practicability, the advantages and the disadvantages of the ocean route be absolutely demonstrated. When we are within a step of being in a position to demonstrate these advantages, I think it would be a great crime not to take that step and secure the completion of the road to the bay.

Mr. MORPHY: Has the hon. gentleman any faith in the practical utility of the road as an outlet for the products of the prairie West, apart altogether from the resources of Hudson Bay?

Mr. OLIVER: That is hardly a practical question before the House at the present time. The Parliament of Canada decided years ago that it was, or would be, a practical outlet for the products of the prairie West. Both sides of the House agreed to that. I maintain that, having agreed to that policy, and having carried construction as far as we have carried it, it is not worth while arguing on that point. We came to a certain conclusion, and acted on it, and being within a short distance of the bay now, it will pay us to complete that small portion of the road as a local developer. It is not really to the point to argue back again on the merits of the original scheme; but, to answer my hon. friend directly, I say that ever since I