

Canadian National Railways

those in the other case, namely, that there would be a guarantee of traffic for a long enough period of years to make this also a profitable venture which would contribute to the revenues of the Canadian National in a significant fashion and which would therefore be a profitable venture.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, when the minister referred to the line in Saskatchewan he gave exact figures of revenues anticipated per year. Does he not propose doing that in this case?

Mr. Pickersgill: I was just coming to that point. Perhaps I could give first the time required for the construction of the line. It could be ready by December 31 if there is authorization by the end of July. The annual movement from the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting plant at a minimum would be 270,000 tons of crude ore. Movement of this crude ore would generate revenues for the Canadian National of \$737,000 per year. As I have said, because of the traffic guarantee which will become operative if parliament approves this legislation there would be a very substantial advantage to the company.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, this is one occasion in which the opposition can join in giving complete support to the propositions advanced by the Minister of Transport. The particular area where the projected 18 miles of rail line is to be constructed in the province of Saskatchewan is well known to me. It is an area which a few years ago was not regarded as hopefully from the point of view of development as some other parts of the province.

It has been found during the last two or three years that in various parts of Saskatchewan the actual hidden wealth in potash is even beyond the greatest scope of imagination. I well recall as a boy on the prairies that in the area in which we lived there were what were called alkali lakes. This alkali produced nothing. The areas that have alkali characteristics were believed to be devoid of any development potential. Certainly agricultural production could never take place where alkali was shown to exist.

• (5:00 p.m.)

There was an area in Muskakee next to Watrous where for a number of years an eastern manufacturer from Kitchener produced certain minerals. Other than that, there was nothing expected or anticipated in this area and others where alkali was to be found

in the sloughs. Today the province of Saskatchewan is rapidly approaching a development which will bring to that province a production equal to wheat production in the years ahead, a production beyond anything that could have been expected. Railroad lines of this kind will receive the fullest support from Her Majesty's opposition.

In saying this I want to point out too that the projected line in the province of Manitoba goes into an area which will pay dividends not only in economic development but also by assuring a fair return on the money invested. We gave leadership in this connection. We were criticized very strongly when we made available to the C.N.R. the necessary guarantee of parliament prior to the building of the Pine Point Railway. I do not intend to deal with this at the moment except to say that it was criticized and ridiculed as part of what was known as my vision for development.

That vision has been proven to be well-founded. Indeed, I hope that not only will assistance be given to the C.N.R. to build railway spurs or lines of the kind in question but that the government will also give favourable consideration to an expansion of the northern roads plan which has gone into cold storage under this administration. The northern roads plan opened up areas of the provinces which would otherwise have remained undeveloped. In the Yukon and the Northwest Territories the northern roads plan made possible mineral developments which would otherwise have been postponed.

The Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources was not here during the days when some of those who sit opposite ridiculed the whole idea. But he has become a convert and, having become a convert, he has gone forth and actually secured support among those ministers who a few short years ago in opposition regarded the whole proposition as an ephemeral dream. We welcome the conversion. We support the fruit of that conversion.

Mr. Laing: Our conversion is from walking to running.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I did not hear that remark.

Mr. Starr: He says he has been converted from running to walking.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pickersgill: A misinterpretation.