

Supply—Transport

lowest estimate to deliver it to the railhead. That simply means that development cannot take place. It means that the people who have settled in the area under the Veterans Land Act and those who have settled there privately have a handicap which I think Canadian National Railways should do something about. It simply means the extension of these lines, and if the railway is not prepared to extend them right through to The Pas at the present time they should at least be extended for another forty or fifty miles to give an outlet to the many settlers in the area. They were promised that when they settled there.

The good land in the area is not confined to the forty or fifty miles that are settled but extends right through to The Pas in Manitoba. If these lines were extended it would mean the development of up to a million acres of new land which cannot be brought under cultivation under present conditions. Therefore I urge the minister to use his influence to see that at the earliest possible date some immediate consideration is given to the extension of these lines. They will pay for themselves. The traffic will be sufficient to justify the expense just as I am sure the traffic over the branch lines which are under construction into mining areas at the present time will justify the expense in building them.

I do not know whether the department or the railways have made a survey, or whether they have any statistics; but the history of the west has shown that when these lines are extended they pay dividends. They transport new agricultural products to the head of the lakes and other parts of Canada, and they bring in a great deal of equipment the new settlers must have in order to carry on production. So I think it is good business that we in Canada should be developing these new areas at this time.

I expect the minister will guess the other matter I wanted to bring to his attention; that is, the port of Churchill and the extension of the season there. I think the time has come when it is quite feasible to extend that season for at least another two weeks in the fall. Last year we had the largest movement of grain out of Churchill to date, and I have seen indications that the number of vessels coming there is expected to be larger this year than ever before. If the season is extended I am sure the number of vessels can be greatly increased, and the port and railway made to pay. Sometimes hon. members think a lot of money is invested there, but I would point out that this government has invested more in defence works at Churchill in the last ten years than the entire cost of the railway and port development. If we can spend those amounts for defence—and I think they were necessary—surely we

[Mr. Wright.]

can also spend the amount necessary to develop that port, extend the season and make it a success.

Mr. Fair: I am not going to make a long speech this evening, but I do want to support the two projects mentioned by the hon. member who has just taken his seat. I have been in northern Saskatchewan and discussed this matter with some of the farmers and businessmen there, and I do know the necessity of making greater use of the port of Churchill.

I also want to support the plea made this afternoon by the hon. member for Bow River that trucks be given a squarer deal than is in prospect for them at the present time if the claims of the railways should get very far. No one argues that the railways do not have their proper place in the economy of the country, but neither should anyone argue that the trucks do not also have their place in the country's business. As was pointed out this afternoon by the hon. member, the trucks showed their usefulness a year ago last August and September when the railway people went on strike. At that time they kept the economy of the country rolling; they kept people from being deprived of their food, and I am sure proved their worth. These agreed charges, if put into effect—as I hope they will not be—would deprive thousands of truckers of a living, and perhaps at a later date would prove a great mistake for the country. Trucks have their place and I hope the minister will see to it that they are given the right to carry on as they have done in the past.

Speaking of the agreed charges leads me to another matter, which was brought up by the hon. member for Peace River. That is the increase in transcontinental rates, which bear very heavily upon my province in particular. I hope the minister will see to these matters and give them the consideration to which they are entitled, in the interests of the prairie provinces.

Mr. Dinsdale: I want to speak briefly on two matters in this general discussion on the Department of Transport estimates. The first has been mentioned already by the two previous speakers, and I realize it is a perennial topic even though this is the first time I have discussed it in the house. I am attracted to the subject because I note in the estimates an increased deficit payment this year with respect to the operation of the Hudson Bay railway. I find that rather difficult to understand in view of the expansion that has taken place in the west and the buoyancy of the Canadian economy in general. Because of its importance I think this topic can stand much repetition. I am rapidly discovering that with respect to even