

Hudson Bay Railway

of wool each year of an exceptionally high grade.

The Dominion Lands Act of 1882 provided for the building of this road by private enterprise, the cost to be defrayed by land grants. In 1908 an amendment to the Lands Act provided for a grant of 6,800 acres per mile to the Saskatchewan river and 12,800 acres per mile for the balance of 2,523,008 acres were given to the Winnipeg and Great Northern railway for construction work to the river.

Some time ago I put a question on the order paper regarding this and the answer appeared in Hansard of February 15. It is as follows:

Mr. Campbell:

1. What is the total number of acres of land sold as authorized by statute of 1908 for the purpose of Hudson bay railway construction?

2. What is the total amount for which this land has been sold?

3. How many acres of land are still held in western Canada on account of the above legislation?

Hon. Mr. Stewart:

1. There was no specific authority under the Dominion Lands Act, 1908, for the sale of land for the purpose of Hudson bay railway construction, but pre-emptions and purchased homesteads were sold under the provisions of the said act as follows:—

2. Total acreage of pre-emptions and purchased homesteads sold under the statute of 1908,—8,050,720 acres approximate. Total amount for which pre-emptions and purchased homesteads have been sold \$24,152,160, approximate.

The minister was quite right in stating that the act itself does not specifically provide for the sale of land for the purpose of the Hudson Bay railway construction. But I submit that this was the distinct and specific object in the passing of this act. If hon. gentlemen have doubts about the matter I would refer them to Hansard of June 23, 1908. I will not weary the House with long quotations, but at page 1153 they will find the following from a speech of the Hon. Mr. Frank Oliver.

We propose to allow the purchase by actual settlers, on settlement conditions, of say 5,000,000 acres of land, realizing thereby, out of a fixed and moderate price per acre, sufficient money to meet the requirements of the government in respect of the railway.

I note on that particular occasion the Hon. R. L. Borden made the following observations:

Even if we do not sell an acre of that land, or no matter how much we sell within the next four or five years, the Hudson bay railway project stands by itself endorsed and approved by this House.

Further on he said:

I trust and am led to believe that the Hudson bay railway project will still go on in the meantime and without delay.

Mr. MEIGHEN: What year was that?

Mr. CAMPBELL: In 1908, June 23rd. Now, Sir, in view of the fact that the railway

will have to be paid for out of the sale of these lands and by the grain and cattle to be produced by the men who purchased these lands; I want to say that we are not here to-day as humble suppliants asking this parliament for favours; we are here demanding our right. This railway is ours, and I maintain that no other part of the Dominion has contributed anything towards its building. The grading has all been done, the bridges are all in, and only 92 miles of steel remain to be laid to complete this road. The then Minister of Railways when asked the question in the year 1920 as to the estimated cost of laying this steel gave the figure of \$1,750,000. But as material and labour costs have decreased since that time, I presume the work could now be done for less. I understand of course that a great deal of the road already built has been allowed to fall into disrepair, and that a considerable amount of money will be required to put it again into proper shape, but the least we can expect is that this railway should be completed to the bay and put in running shape and local traffic allowed to develop—the traffic from fishing, mining and lumbering industries. In that way we would get a very fair chance to try out the project and convince those who are still doubtful that it is quite feasible.

I should like to observe that the townsite at Fort Churchill has unfortunately been allowed to pass into private hands. The townsite at Port Nelson is still in the possession of the government, and I trust that the hon. Minister of the Interior (Mr. Stewart) will see that it is retained until such time as it is needed for actual use instead of being allowed to pass into the hands of speculators.

The hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Marcell) asked one hon. member on this side of the House what would become of the Canadian National Railways if the Hudson Bay railway were completed and in operation. Now, Sir, that question carried with it the implication that the scheme was feasible, and I was almost pleased to hear the hon. gentleman make the inquiry. It appears to me that those opposing this project are divided into two classes: those who think it is feasible and oppose it because it is feasible—I do not imply of course that the hon. member for Bonaventure is opposing the resolution; he did not say so—and those who, perhaps honestly, think the project is not feasible.

In going over the estimates that we have been dealing with recently perhaps I may be allowed to observe, without appearing sectional in any way, that after carefully elim-