

*Edmonton, Dunvegan Railway*

Just what the prospects of an early decision on the matter were, the premier would not say. It is known that the Dominion is anxious to conclude the session at Ottawa by May 15, and that unless some agreement were reached by the end of next week it would be too late to have parliament ratify it before prorogation and it would have to stand over until next session.

In the event of an agreement being reached immediately and the offer presented to parliament—

That is one of the press reports indicating the possibility of selling this railway. In the *Montreal Gazette* of April 21, 1928, there is a Canadian Press despatch as follows:

Premier Brownlee, who has just returned from his trip to Ottawa and Montreal, reports that some progress has been made as a result of the ministerial mission in regard to the northern railway situation. He is hopeful of the Canadian National offer for the Alberta and Great Western line being somewhat improved, and until it is definitely known what action will be taken in that direction there will be no final decision on the sale—

On the sale, remember.

—of the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway. It was made clear to both the transcontinental heads, says, Mr. Brownlee, that the Alberta government does not care to part with the Peace River lines unless it can satisfactorily dispose of the waterways road also, and the latter is, therefore, the key to the entire situation. If a better offer for the Alberta and Great Western comes through early enough, a summer session of the Alberta legislature will probably be called.

Agreement was reported upon a number of points affecting the sale of the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia, which will considerably better the province's interests, providing that the waterways deal materializes. Whatever further action is taken in the matter will depend upon a conference between Presidents Beatty and Thornton, to be held shortly.

I think that fairly definitely establishes the fact that the road is for sale. In insisting on similar stringent provisions to those which some hon. members desire to make in our bridge charters in southern Ontario, I am quite in order in moving the amendment which appears in the votes and proceedings of May 2, as I do not want my hon. friends opposite to be led astray. It is even possible that the Sarnia bridge people might buy this railway, and I want to guard my hon. friend from Peace River against such a contingency. In a press report from Edmonton of April 17, 1928, I find the following statement by another prominent man in the Alberta government, the Hon. Vernor Smith:

No sale of the Alberta government-owned railroads has been effected to date according to Hon. Vernor W. Smith, minister of railways and telephones, who returned to the city on

[Mr. Hepburn.]

Tuesday morning after a two weeks and a half trip to Ottawa and Montreal with Premier J. E. Brownlee.

Conferences were held with both Sir Henry Thornton and E. W. Beatty, K.C., presidents, respectively, of the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways, said the minister, but they were continuing their study of the problem along the lines submitted in the amended joint offer placed before the last session of the legislature.

Sir Henry was interviewed first and Mr. Beatty second. Mr. Beatty was seen on the last day of the minister's stay in Montreal and his final word was that a further interview would be held with Sir Henry Thornton.

Hon. Mr. Smith could not say whether a new offer would be made. This would be determined no doubt by the conference between the two railway heads. Asked whether any intimation had been given by either president regarding a new offer for the Alberta and Great Waterways railways, the minister said he presumed it was being considered in connection with the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia line.

The minister and the premier parted company at Montreal, the former coming home by way of Toronto and the premier going by way of Chicago. En route the minister visited the Welland canal now in course of construction, at a cost of \$125,000,000. It is 24 miles long, he said. The largest steam shovel in the world, capable of loading cars raised 60 feet above it, was in use. Some sections of it will be completed within the next year.

In that part of the west it appears they are making a serious effort to sell this railway. Usually when a railway charter is granted settlers flock in. I do not think it is fair that such people should be misled. I have their welfare at heart just as much as my hon. friends have at heart the welfare of those residing in southern Ontario. Certainly it is not fair to settlers in that part of the west to bolster up their hopes in this regard. Before this charter is granted the promoters of the bill should be subjected to the same stringent requirements as were put forward in the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines with respect to the bill for the Port Burwell and London Railway; that is, they should give some guarantee of good faith.

That there is no unanimity of opinion behind this railway is apparent from press dispatches. Mr. Hugh Allen, M.L.A., of that district, made a speech at a banquet at Wembley on May 27 last, and I think it will be of interest to the committee if I read an extract from it because it voices his views:

The joint offer for the provincially-owned railways was then taken up:

"The series of questions as to the joint offer for the provincially-owned railways, which had been directed at Premier Brownlee were a matter of interest to all.