

ada to protection, endorse a vicious principle such as is embodied in the Bill before us.

As the honourable member from Toronto (Hon. Sir Edward Kemp) has just said, the performance of the present Board of Directors, as it has come to public knowledge during the last few weeks, does not inspire confidence or encourage Parliament to give a blank cheque to the Minister of Railways to be handed over to the Board managing the Canadian National, to enable them to construct more than 1,000 miles of additional lines at whatever price they see fit to pay.

I hope that the honourable leader of the Government in this House will take cognizance of the suggestion made and will see fit to withdraw the Bill and will urge upon the Government that if there are any lines on which in their opinion expenditures must be made this year, over and above what are provided for in the \$73,000,000 in the Main Estimates, they will submit their requirements to this House before prorogation; and if prorogation is to take place to-morrow the Government must act quickly.

Hon. H. W. LAIRD: Honourable gentlemen, this is a matter of such transcendent importance to the Province of Saskatchewan, from which I have the honour to come, that I do not intend to allow it to approach the vote which must ultimately be taken without making a few observations upon the situation created by the discussion of this measure.

We have heard a great deal in this House to-night with regard to the conditions in the Province of Saskatchewan, and I propose to confine any remarks of mine to that Province. We have been given much information regarding the territory in that Province through which the proposed lines are to be built. It is unnecessary for me to supplement what has already been said, except to state that I have personal knowledge of the areas which would be served by the proposed branch lines, and I can assure this House that in every case they are absolutely essential to the development and progress of that province. These are not new lines; they are merely extensions of present lines for the purpose of supplying the needs of the settlers who went in before railways were built. Those men have borne the burden and heat of the day for many years. They have had to haul their crops of grain for 20, 30, even 60 miles in order to load it upon the railway cars. I have a personal knowledge of the great Carrot River district, north and east of Prince Albert, which is to be served by one of these

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON.

proposed lines. It is the garden of Saskatchewan, one of the most magnificent parks in the whole of Canada. I have a knowledge of the Willow Bunch country in the southeastern part of the province. I have myself seen 55 bushels to the acre grown on land in that district 30 or 40 miles away from any railway track. The House will therefore recognize at a glance the absolute necessity for giving at least some service to those people, who have settled there in good faith and opened up that country and are cultivating the land. They must at some time or other be served with railway facilities, which must be provided by this Government.

I will not say anything further as to the need of the territory to be served by these roads. I think we may take for granted, from what we have heard this evening, that they are entitled to railway service. That being the case, we ask why, under these circumstances, the Government does not bring down this legislation at this Session in such a form that it can be accepted by Parliament, and provide these services which ostensibly they are willing to grant. Let us ask the question, do they really want to build those roads?

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: No.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD: Ostensibly, from the Bill brought down they do; but, if we investigate a little further, some doubt arises in my mind. If they wanted to build those roads, why was not the usual course followed in bringing down this railway legislation? Why did they depart in this particular case, and impose conditions which they surely must know could not be accepted by this House? Whether or not the Government as a whole are disposed to desire these roads, we are certain that some of the most important elements in the Government ranks are not disposed to accept them. Even my honourable friend the leader of the Government did not seem any too earnest in his presentation of these Bills. We know from his capacity, and from past experience in presenting legislation to this House, the earnestness of which he is capable, and the ability with which he can present his case; and I think, reading between the lines, that in this case we have seen some evidence that even he was not quite so much in earnest in presenting this legislation as he has been on other occasions. But whether the leader is particularly in earnest or not, we have the absolute certainty that his leading lieutenants surrounding him are not in favour of passing this legislation. Last evening one of the most distinguished mem-