

merchandise is going to be so great that the route is not going to be able to compete with the lake route to Georgian bay and rail to Montreal.

Port Nelson was this year blocked with ice on August 29, and there was still ice around the harbour entrance on September 6, proof of which I enclose.

Later Mr. McLachlan goes on to say:

The extreme season will count in a commercial route. I also feel that we cannot extend the latter end of the season beyond the date on which our ships have been leaving in recent years.

Then referring to the possibilities of the Hudson Bay railway in colonization or in developing the country, and leaving aside for the moment the question of the navigability of the Hudson bay and straits as a commercial route to Europe, Mr. McLachlan has this to say:

There is nothing for the Hudson bay north of the Huronian rock outcrops south of Split lake.

Mr. GARDINER: Is the hon. member quoting from a report prepared by Engineer McLachlan?

Mr. NICHOLSON: Yes, I have just read extracts from the report of this gentleman.

Mr. GARDINER: Is this the Mr. McLachlan who bought a million dollar sand-sucking dredge for the purpose of removing hardpan?

Mr. NICHOLSON: I do not know anything about the dredges Mr. McLachlan bought, but I do know that just a day or so ago the Minister of Railways, in reporting to this House that a board of engineers had been employed by this government to make surveys of the St. Lawrence route, told us that Mr. McLachlan,—this very same Mr. McLachlan—as one of the most outstanding engineers on this continent, had been made chairman of that board. I do not know Mr. McLachlan; I am simply submitting his report, but I do know he was in that country for five years.

Mr. DUNNING: May I ask a question? Why does the hon. member quote that one report of Mr. McLachlan's, and why does he make no reference at all to the evidence given by this gentleman in 1920 before the Senate committee? Why is no reference made to Mr. McLachlan's further report of 1922? He had had four years more experience then.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Let me answer that question with another. Was Mr. McLachlan in there between 1920 and 1925?

Mr. DUNNING: Mr. McLachlan came out in 1920.

Mr. NICHOLSON: In 1917 Mr. McLachlan makes this statement based on four

years' experience at Port Nelson. I have read every single word of the contradictory evidence included in that Senate report; I have read everything I could get dealing with this question, but there is no consistent evidence anywhere to show that the Hudson straits can be navigated commercially. I am not going to say they cannot be navigated because I do not know, but before this country is committed to an expenditure of this character we should take the only means possible to find out; we should put these ships on that route and let them navigate the straits themselves. Spending money on a railway to Port Nelson and spending money on terminals and elevators will not prove anything in relation to that route. If the Hudson straits are navigable and if that route can be made available commercially there is no man in Canada who will not hold up both hands for the completion of that route and its development as a link between western Canada and Europe.

Coming to the appeal that is being made to members of this House to deal generously with western Canada because of their freight rate condition, because of what it costs to get the products of the west to the markets of the world, what is it that has intensified that condition? What it is more than anything else that has created the transportation difficulties that we have in this country? It is just because parliament has allowed itself in times past to be stampeded into projects of this character—a transcontinental, then a second transcontinental, and all that kind of thing—without adequate information as to what any one of these projects really means, with the result that we have a capital charge that our transportation business must take care of, and which is bearing it down, and will continue to bear it down. So long as we continue to throw millions and tens of millions of dollars into projects of this character without knowing before we start what the ultimate result is going to be, just so long will our difficulties continue.

Mr. MILLAR: Would the hon. member put the Welland canal in that class?

Mr. NICHOLSON: Yes, I would put the Welland canal or any other project involving the expenditure of large amounts of capital in that class, when proper estimates are not given, in the first instance, as to what these things are going to cost, and in the second instance, as to the results we are going to get from them. I am not in the slightest degree embarrassed by what hon. members may say in regard to the Welland canal or any other project that Canada has entered into and that