

thousands of passengers with their provisions and their baggage.

Add to that the revenue of the country between Hervey Junction, La Tuque and Parent, where powerful companies employ thousands of men in their shanties. In a word, the receipts, even computed at exceedingly low rates, would have reached \$200,000.

But it is very simple. There are 1,500 lots allotted to settlers in Abitibi. They are anxious to begin or to increase their clearings. There are waiting for only that,—a train service which will allow them to export their wood. Should only 30 cords of wood have been cut on each lot,—a settler cuts that much in a month,—and we would have had 45,000 cords to ship. As the year is excellent for the pulp industry, every cord would have been sold.

If the minister had yielded to our requests, there would have been, this winter, work for thousands of men in Abitibi and all along the Transcontinental, instead of stagnation and hard times which exist there to-day. In the spring there would have been thousands of acres of newly cleared land. When we know that what is most important in that region, is immediate and extensive clearing, in order to ensure progress of agriculture and the paying operation of this section of the Transcontinental, we are astounded to see what a splendid opportunity has been lost.

I have just received another letter from Mr. Authier written on the 26th February. It is written in French, and I shall quote only a few words:

Nobody will question, I believe, the facts that I have put before the public. Nothing has been done since to assist us. It is vaguely rumoured that the Federal Government will again hand over the Transcontinental between Cochrane and Quebec to the contractors next spring. That would mean the continuation of our actual trouble, so to speak. There would be three or four services—three or four divisions. I mean—on that section. Passengers would be obliged to change trains very often, and by the time each contractor has exacted his pound of flesh there will be hardly anything left to the colonist who wishes to settle in the forest of Abitibi. If it is intended to thus have the road operated by contractors this summer, a direct service ought to be established without interruption between Hervey Junction and Abitibi. As I was saying the Transcontinental railway was closed this winter between Hervey Junction on the Canadian Northern railway and Amos on the Harricana in the centre of Abitibi in Quebec, a distance of over 350 miles.

It is from 600 to 700 miles from Cochrane to Quebec.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN—I think between 400 and 500 miles.

Hon. Mr. DAVID—No, from Cochrane to Quebec is about from 600 to 700. The figures given by Mr. Authier disposed of the objection made by the Minister of Railways, and showed that there was no serious reason to discontinue the operation of the railway between Abitibi and Hervey Junction; and even in the supposition that there would

have been a deficit, it was nothing as compared to the evil done by the suspension of the operation of the line, to the great detriment of the agricultural, commercial and industrial interests of that rich country, in a time when so much is said about the necessity of increasing agricultural production among our rural population. I cannot understand the conduct of the Government in this regard. It looks as though the intention of the Government was to ruin that section of the line, to make it only a local line, to remove from it its transcontinental character, contrary to the object which the promoters had in view, to the will of Parliament, and to the views so often expressed by our public men on the necessity of directing our trade to transcontinental ports. It is not only a breach of contract, but it is a breach of the obligation assumed by Parliament; it will not only divert trade towards the United States, but will do the greatest harm to the settlement and progress of that rich portion of our country. It will discourage the settlers—and this is not a time in which they should be discouraged. All the settlers of that district have relied upon the continuous operation of the Northern Transcontinental, and, hon. gentlemen, think of those settlers who have very little money, who went there to establish themselves, feeling assured that the law passed by the Government would be put into execution; think of their fate with no railway to communicate with the principal towns of the country. Already it is said that a great number of settlers have left that region of the country. No doubt they must go. Notwithstanding the ability of the hon. leader of the House, I do not see how he can justify the Government in such a dereliction of its duty. I hope, and the whole country hopes, that the Government will not transfer the Northern Transcontinental to the Grand Trunk without compelling that company to act in accordance with its contract, according to the intention of Parliament, and in accordance with the interests of the country, so as to secure the trade of the West to our national ports. Let me finish by quoting the speech of Mr. Casgrain on the transportation question, when the National Transcontinental Railway Bill came before the House. The speech is more eloquent than anything I can say. He said:

In the Northwest we have, or are going to have in a short time, a great many roads—the Canadian Pacific railway, the Canadian Northern, and probably the Trans-Canada and the Grand Trunk Pacific—all supplying the needs of that vast territory and bringing to the