

conclusion that it was a petition to the House of Commons. It was not a petition to the House of Commons; the Minister of Railways (Mr. Manion) if I remember correctly, has a copy of it, as I have, and it was quite legitimate for me to mention the petition before the hon. members of this chamber and, if necessary, to read parts of it without any objection coming from the Prime Minister or any supporter of the government or of the party opposite. I was prevented, however, by a humbug argument, as it were, from referring to that petition, and that is why I think the matter should not be entirely dropped and why I take advantage of the present opportunity not only to say something in favour of the resolution, but also to deal with a counterpart of it concerning the "Northland" in northern Saskatchewan.

The Minister of Railways on a later occasion answered a question with regard to more railway accommodation in the northern part of the constituency of North Battleford by making a statement which will be found at page 643 of Hansard of February 16. I believe it is the kind of general statement which the Minister of Railways usually makes to a question of this kind. I do not know whether he can make any other answer or not. Perhaps he is in earnest and really cannot make any other answer, and if so we shall have to abide by that decision. But his answer was that I knew quite well the position of this railway north of the North Saskatchewan and in between North Battleford and Edmonton. I certainly know it quite well, but that is no reason I should not bring it up again in parliament to find out whether the government had any new policy on it. My reason for bringing it up was to discover whether the government or the Department of Railways had during the summer formulated any new policy with regard to the construction of that line, and I was quite sincere in the question I asked at that time. The minister went on to say that he had written me because I had brought the matter up time and again in the house and had also written him time and again about it. That was quite right. Then he went on further to say:

He knows that the matter has to be submitted to the management of the railway, and when the management are deciding to recommend to the government and parliament the building of branch lines the railway he is supporting will be given consideration along with others.

That is tantamount to an admission that this branch line railway connecting the country north of the North Saskatchewan river and between North Battleford and Edmonton will not be built until there is a general program

[Mr. McIntosh.]

of branch line building throughout the dominion. I do not think that is fair; I believe there is such a thing as making a special case of a particular railway problem, and I believe this is just as much a particular railway problem as is the Peace River outlet.

Mr. MANION: Which of them is the hon. member supporting at the moment?

Mr. McINTOSH: I am supporting both of them. I believe the Peace River outlet is a particular problem and ought to be given special attention, and perhaps if it were, something might be done. The unfinished part of what is practically equal to a main line between North Battleford and Edmonton, north of the North Saskatchewan river, is also a particular railway problem and ought to be given special attention.

May I say again that although seventy miles of that railway line has been graded, during the last four years not a tap of work has been done on it and the grading is falling to pieces. Although 10,000 settlers from southern Saskatchewan, southern Alberta, southern Manitoba, indeed, from all parts of western Canada and many from the east, have gone into that very productive area and have been trying to hew out homes for themselves, not a thing has been done in the last four years to finish the sixty-nine or seventy miles of road that could be completed without difficulty or much cost to the country. In 1930 we had relief camps in that part of northern Saskatchewan and with seven or eight experts in laying steel, all the government would have had to do would have been to hire a few of those men and there was enough labour there to have those seventy miles steeled, yet it was not done. The steel that could have been used to complete that line has, I understand, been taken out of that district entirely; the ties are there, rotting by the wayside, and the grading is falling to pieces; yet 10,000 settlers are calling out for railway relief and for four years a policy of vacillation has been pursued with nothing accomplished. That is not fair; it is not playing the game; it is not doing what could be done, because that road, when built, will return to the exchequer of Canada every cent that is required for the building of it. There is no question about that road being a paying one. Not a single official of the Canadian National Railways can produce in the House of Commons facts to prove that any line of railways that has been built in northern Saskatchewan has not been a paying road during normal years. Those branch lines have also helped to make a paying proposition of the