

Mr. MARLER: If hon. gentlemen will not treat this matter seriously, I assure them that the country will treat it seriously. Hon. members will be held accountable for voting in this committee or in the House later on for expenditures of this kind without having before them the necessary information. It is not a question of dealing with any particular province or any particular part of the country; every one of these lines has to be considered on its merits. I am not saying that this line in British Columbia is not a proper line or that the line in Guysborough is not a proper one, but I do say that we have not the information before us to judge properly of this thing. The matter should be put before us in a more intelligent way. We should have maps before us; we should have the engineers before us and the board of management. The board of management have made mistakes in the past; we know of the mistakes they have made, and we want to judge for ourselves whether or not they are making a mistake now. I am not pointing particularly to this British Columbia line or to any other line, but I say we are proceeding in a very light hearted manner in voting millions in this House the way we are doing now.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I sympathize almost entirely with what the hon. member says. I have never expressed any satisfaction with the data brought down, but I have said that it is a lot more ample in this case than in cases where it was needed much more.

Mr. POWER: Even the smallest amount of praise from the right hon. gentleman immediately sends us into the heaven of expectation. We are so pleased with that little amount that we think he is praising us extremely.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I cannot really define the satisfaction I take from exalting my hon. friend even into the first heaven. Certainly the data laid before the House should be such as *prima facie* would show that this will be a paying line and will serve a large section of the population struggling now to be served. In this case I happen to know the district. In this case I have peculiar information. I do not assume I know it nearly as well as the hon. member behind me (Mr. Mac-Kelvie) or the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. McBride), but I know it fairly well and have known it for some years. From what general knowledge I have of it, it would appear to me to be a line that would certainly pay the railway, and a line

[Mr. Marler.]

undoubtedly the lack of which is causing very great suffering and hardship. But I am in full accord with what the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George has said: We ought to have a *prima facie* case on the authority of the president in this as in every other case, for hon. members who are not so well acquainted with the different territories through which these lines are to run, in order that all may give their votes in an intelligent and conscientious way. But we must be reasonable; we cannot have Sir Henry Thornton or his engineers before this House. There will come a time later on, after the bills are brought down, when the suggestions of the hon. member in that regard will be more appropriate than at this time. I do not think we ought to find fault with any of the bills in that regard, nor have I done so; but I do demand, in this case as in every other, on behalf of other hon. members as well as on behalf of myself that we should have the certificate of Sir Henry Thornton that it is his judgment that the road should be built, and not only his certificate, but the basic facts beneath the certificate to enable us to form an independent judgment of our own.

Mr. MARLER: Do I understand that my hon. friend is satisfied with a written certificate?

Mr. MEIGHEN: No, I want the basic facts beneath the certificate, the business facts to enable us to form an independent judgment of our own. I do not think we ought to take the judgment of anybody; I do not see how we can. If we are ready to take it, what are we here for? We might just as well let the president and board of directors do what they wish. We have to form an independent judgment of our own, and I am wholly in accord with what the hon. member says, that we should have the facts before us to enable us to do so. But I do not think we can have them before us in great detail and subject them to cross-examination in Committee of the Whole. A time later on may come for that, but we should have in outline such facts as, if proven correct on examination, would warrant the road being finished.

Mr. HUMPHREY: I would like to endorse thoroughly the remarks made by the hon. member for Cariboo and the hon. member for Yale. I am fully conversant with the characteristics of the part of the country through which this branch line will run, and although this particular branch line does not touch my own district, I know the conditions there very well, and I can give full support to the hon. member for Cariboo and