

I endorse that plea on behalf of the settlers who have gone into that country. It has been stated already that many people took up homesteads in the Peace River district on the strength of a promise or understanding that railway facilities would be afforded. That may or may not be true with regard to the first settlers; as to that I cannot say, but certainly it is true with regard to the settlers who have gone in during comparatively recent years. They were promised an outlet from the Peace River district to the coast; the people who went in after those promises, representations and undertakings were made and given went in on the strength of them. They have been holding on to their farms under the greatest difficulties, unable to do more than merely support themselves, with freight rates which make it impossible to market their grain with any hope of profit. They have been holding on in the hope that the promises made by both parties will be implemented.

Some hon. gentlemen opposite are very quick to refer to the promise or undertaking given by the leader of the Conservative party in 1926. May I remind them that the language of the right hon. gentleman on that and other occasions was not nearly so definite or clear in its immediate prospect of fulfilment as the promise and pledge given by the then leader of the Liberal party. The present right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. MacKenzie King), when in power, gave the pledge that this would be done forthwith. The construction of an outlet from the Peace River district to the Pacific coast was to be the spearhead of the Liberal policy, but apparently the spearhead was rather blunt. It made no apparent impression on the policy of the government, so that to-day we are just where we were in 1925 and 1926.

I know these settlers; they are of a peculiarly high type and character. They are men who have gone to that area not for the purpose of making fortunes or for the purpose of turning their farms into grain mines; they have gone there to make homes and root themselves in that part of Alberta with the idea of becoming permanent settlers, in that area. They are coming into the Peace River district in increasing numbers; the calamity of the drought which fell upon the southern part of Alberta and Saskatchewan, and conditions in the United States, have had the effect of driving hundreds and thousands of settlers to that great north country. During the last year and a half they have poured in, and because they went there with the assurance that both great political parties were pledged to construct a Peace River outlet,

they have a right to demand the fulfilment of that promise.

We on this side of the house appreciate to the full the difficulties presented by the financial condition of the country; we recognize the imperative nature of the demand made upon the treasury, and the necessity that resources should be husbanded and absolutely no unnecessary expenditures made. For that and for other reasons it has been suggested that the proper policy is to wait until the country has become so populated that a railway will pay. That is a wrong policy; in any case it is a policy which cannot fairly be pursued in relation to the great Peace River district. After all, the best way to populate the country is to give it railway facilities. The argument has been raised that more than a Peace River outlet the country needs branch lines running into the more thickly populated districts, touching the best farm lands and uniting them with the main line. But the branch lines referred to will be built and put upon a paying basis much quicker if the Peace River outlet is provided; because with better railway facilities and cheaper freight rates there is no doubt in the world that there would be an increased influx of settlers into that north country.

The settlers in the Peace River district have watched the progress of political action and have compared promise with performance. They have seen great undertakings carried out by past governments while that which was pledged to them was forgotten. They have seen the great expenditures made on the Hudson Bay railway; and I remember that in 1926 I was one of the very few who protested against the construction of that road. I pleaded with the government of the day that before any more money was spent on the Hudson Bay railway, the Peace river outlet should be constructed. I suppose possibly \$50,000,000, perhaps \$60,000,000 will be spent on the Hudson Bay railway to obtain a very problematical advantage in the future, whereas there is in the Peace River district a great agricultural empire which at the present time is merely a cul-de-sac at the end of a railway. This road, although greatly improved during the past few years, is not of the best and heavy freight rates prevail.

I need not remind this house of the evidence of the wealth and the great agricultural possibilities of the Peace River country. I recall the fact that the blue ribbon in the grain world for wheat and oats has been won again and again by a farmer who resides and has resided for many years in that district. For these reasons I support with my whole heart