

*Supply—Hudson Bay Railway*

a great deal more evidence than is now before us. Why not carry out the suggestion made in one of the articles to which I have already referred and let the government appoint a commission, not of politicians, but entirely of technical experts—such men as the past president of the Engineering Institute, Mr. R. A. Ross, whom I do not know personally, but whose reputation is Dominion-wide?

Mr. BEAUBIEN: Are not technical engineers a good deal like lawyers, never agreed on anything?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: They may be; but after all I have a good deal of confidence in technical engineers and in modern scientists generally. I would say we ought to have experts in engineering, in railroading, in harbour construction, in shipping operation and in grain handling. Let these men get together and make a thorough study of the subject at a cost of a few hundred thousand dollars, if need be, and prepare a report—not such a report as that made by the Senate after calling a few people before a committee to answer a few random questions.

Mr. BIRD: How could engineers investigate the problem in any other way than it has already been investigated?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I am not an engineer, but when hon. gentlemen of the Progressive party go up to the Hudson bay, take a look at the water, swim in it, and then come back and tell us the route is feasible, I should suggest it is quite possible that engineers with the scientific data available ought to be able to give some sort of opinion that would be at least equally as valuable.

Mr. BIRD: How would engineers investigate navigating conditions?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I said not only engineers but men expert in shipping operations.

Mr. BIRD: How would they go about the work?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: There are a number of suggestions to be made. I have heard, for example, that we could have a good deal of help if the line was once in operation by having ships direct their course through drifting ice by means of airplane observation. I might say I was talking to some airmen about it, and they did not relish the prospect, but if that suggestion is feasible after the line is completed, it is feasible now. Further, I cannot see why some of the ships of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine that

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

are being sold off should not be sent there to make frequent trips during the next two or three years and keep a careful record of navigating conditions.

Mr. HAY: An expedition was sent up there forty years ago by the government of Sir John A. Macdonald, and we have their report. They got expert advice.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Yes, I have read that report. And I know perfectly well as an old-timer in the west that that route has been used by the Hudson's Bay Company through all these years.

Mr. HAY: I am not speaking of the Hudson's Bay Company; I am speaking of the expedition sent by the government of Sir John A. Macdonald in 1885.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I said I had read that report, and I added that the route has been used by the Hudson's Bay Company for a much longer period. All that is true, but it is one thing to have a ship go there and wait until the ice clears; it is quite another thing to operate steamships under modern commercial conditions. We might profitably spend a very considerable sum of money in investigating this proposition before embarking on the heavy expenditure necessary if it is to become a practical grain-carrying route.

Mr. DUNNING: I wonder if my hon. friend will permit me to make an explanation at this point that I should have made earlier in the day. So far as scientific investigation is concerned, we already have the Nelson estuary completely charted right out to deep water, soundings have been taken on two separate occasions, and the maps are in existence. So engineering data relating to the Nelson estuary is already fully available. With regard to the harbour of Churchill, there is in existence the hydrographic survey of 1910 with the soundings out to deep water. There is also considerable information available from the Department of Marine and Fisheries regarding the currents in Hudson straits and the navigation conditions there generally. I merely give this information in order to assure my hon. friend that the technical aspects of these various questions have not been lost sight of by past governments and are not being overlooked by the present government. We have in the various departments of government technical experts on these matters, and the air service suggestion to which my hon. friend made reference is under consideration. I may say that that idea is rather promising. It must be remembered that icebergs, as such, are seldom if