

Peace River—Railway Outlet

of Doctor Bruce by repute for many years before he came here. I was aware of his great interest in matters of public concern in his own province. I had an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with him here, and I am sure we of this group will associate ourselves with the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) and those on the government side in wishing him a long and happy life, in whatever he may undertake.

Mr. ROBERT FAIR (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, from this corner of the house we wish to join with other hon. members who have already spoken in wishing Doctor Bruce a happy retirement from the house. I have been able to count him among my friends, and the hon. members in this corner have appreciated his contribution to the public life of Canada.

PEACE RIVER DISTRICT

RAILWAY OUTLET TO PACIFIC COAST

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Irvine:

That, in the opinion of this house, the government should give immediate consideration to the building of a railway outlet from the Peace River country to the Pacific coast.

Mr. FULTON: Mr. Speaker, when the house rose at six o'clock I had just completed dealing in a general way with some of the resources of the area we are discussing, namely the Peace River area, and the desirability of developing these resources. I shall endeavour to conclude my remarks certainly within ten minutes and, if possible, within five, to leave the floor for discussion on the part of those other hon. members who wish to add their weight to what has been said.

Something has been said about driving spikes on the railway. I regret that my spike cannot be more in the nature of a golden spike. Possibly the minister will drive what we might call the golden spike in this railroad. Mine, however, will be a more workmanlike spike because, from now on, for the next few minutes, I intend to address myself to a few facts which I believe will give some practical support to the resolution. When I refer to my spike being more workmanlike, I must explain that it will be more workmanlike in appearance only. It may be that the minister's spike which would forge the last link would be the golden spike, and of great value.

The area in question has been described. We have heard about its resources, and we have also had some description of the present service afforded that area. Hon. members will recall that practically the only rail communication is from one side of the Peace

[Mr. MacInnis.]

river via the Northern Alberta railways to Edmonton. Then we have the main line of the Canadian National Railways, the shortest route to the sea, being a line direct from Edmonton to Prince Rupert, and another line from Edmonton to Vancouver.

As hon. members will recall, it means an extra haul of from 1,000 to 1,500 miles to get to the water, because it has to go first to the east, to Edmonton, and then come back the same distance west. That line of the Canadian National Railways to Prince Rupert goes through Prince George, which is in the constituency of Cariboo, the constituency from which the hon. member who has offered the resolution comes.

Some seventy-five miles south of Prince George is the town of Quesnel, which is the northern terminal of the Pacific Great Eastern railway. That railway runs from Quesnel southwesterly to Squamish on the coast north of Vancouver. So that we have a gap of approximately seventy miles between Prince George and Quesnel. That gap, it should be noted, was at one time graded. There has been a right of way put through there, but the rails were never laid.

If, then, we can get a railway from Quesnel to Prince George there would be a junction with the Canadian National Railways line to Prince Rupert. Thus we have the line from Edmonton to Squamish, which is practically from Edmonton direct to Vancouver, serving not only the Peace River, but also that other area of north central British Columbia, which at present has hardly any outlet, namely the Prince George-Quesnel district.

It is further significant to note that as the line runs down from Quesnel to Squamish, at one point on its length, in the vicinity of Pavilion and Clinton, there is a gap of only some forty miles between it and the main line of the Canadian National Railways to Vancouver. So that if we were to build a railway first from Prince George to the Peace River, that would be the first requisite. The hon. member for Cariboo has emphasized the importance of that, and I feel I need say no more on the subject. Then we have only a seventy-five mile gap from Quesnel to Prince George, and a forty mile gap from Pavilion or Clinton to Lytton, or the main line of the Canadian National Railways in the vicinity of Ashcroft or Savona. We have a complete hook-up giving direct access from the port of Vancouver to the very heart of the Peace River district.

Briefly, the advantages of such a set-up would be, first, that the Peace River would have its outlet to the great port of Vancouver.