

*Hudson Bay Railway*

that district. Besides, employment would be furnished to large numbers of people and opportunities for settlement would be afforded.

For these reasons and many others I could give, I say we should complete that road. The amount involved would not be very great, and the experiment is worth making, if only in order that we may keep our word. The main source of the money expended on that road has been the public lands of the West. The West is therefore security for it, and there certainly will be just as much local traffic over that road to Hudson bay, altogether apart from any consideration of sea traffic, as has followed from the development of the Northern Ontario and Temiskaming road. That is almost the best piece of railroad in Ontario to-day, although when it was first projected everyone declared that it was a mere chimera, that there was nothing in it for the province or for those who put their money into it. That part of the country is one of the best sections of the Dominion to-day; it is the best country in the world for men to go to, whether they have capital or are seeking labour. It is the best market in America for labour at the present time, because the demand for men for the mines cannot be supplied. And it may be a great coal country; we shall probably get anthracite there if we are to believe what some of the geologists tell us. But at all events there are great coal and timber resources in that part of the country, and there is also a good chance for farming.

One thing, however, is lacking; and for some reason or other this parliament is reluctant to keep its word. Why should we not keep our word and complete that road? I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the government will see its way to complete this railway, and I hope that before this debate closes the Minister of Railways (Mr. Graham) will announce on behalf of the administration that it is the intention to carry out the contracts that were made, first by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and then by the Conservative government. I do not know whether the Union government was committed to the undertaking, but certainly this House has pledged its word in the matter; and the people of Canada want to see the road completed. The people of Ontario, the people of Manitoba, and the people of the West generally are anxious to have the work carried through, because they see in the completion of the road some hope of relief from the excessive freight rates that have obtained in the past. The western people hope for some relief from the opening up of the Vancouver route in conjunction with the Panama canal,

[Mr. W. F. Maclean.]

as an outlet for the grain of the West. And we in Ontario wish to see the waterways between Port Arthur and the Atlantic, by way of the St. Lawrence and the canals, improved as another outlet for the products of the West. We must try all these things and make various experiments, because the providing of more outlets for our products is a vital necessity.

And here let me say a word for the National Railways. The greatest asset Canada has to-day is its national railways. These railways have not done their best; they have done their worst so far. But a new and better management is perhaps coming into operation, and the men now in charge will be held responsible for a genuine attempt to solve the grievances of the West in so far as the railways can do so. Up to the present this has not been done; there is rather too much delay in putting the National Railways to the work they are capable of doing. Certainly a reasonable time should be given the new board to organize. But after all we want results; and I have no doubt as to what the National Railways will be able to do if they are properly managed. There is not a better railway in the world; and I will say, to the credit of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, although I do not know where he got the inspiration, that the greatest branch of the National Railways to-day is that line running from Winnipeg to Quebec. It is on the top of a great plain and has a two-fifths grade; and the part of the country through which it runs is rich in agricultural possibilities and in mining. It is a fine country in every way, and the railway from Winnipeg to Quebec is one of the best pieces of railway we have on the Canadian National. No matter what we do with the waterways, this line from Winnipeg to Quebec is one of the solutions of the grievances of the western farmers. These farmers have two real grievances, one in regard to transportation, and the other the fact that they are debarred from the great American market. Whether in the new and broader view that mankind is inclined to take of some of these problems that have arisen since the war, this impediment will be removed, I do not know. There seems, however, a possibility of better relations between the people of the United States and those of Canada, although I do not say that there is. At any rate, there is a better feeling growing up between English-speaking people generally. On the whole, therefore, I do not despair of the future of the Canadian West, but this parliament must help them in the present situation; and I will give what little support I can to this proposition. Canada owes it as a duty to carry out this work, because the country has been