

would pay for the expense of constructing and operating a colonization road to open it up.

Mr. MULLINS: Yes.

Mr. DUNNING: Some of my hon. friends are answering the question. It is not proposed to build this line solely for the purpose of developing the agricultural possibilities, but there are agricultural possibilities northeast of The Pas along the line of the Hudson Bay railway.

Mr. CAHAN: I am not denying that, but I am saying that they are very limited in area, and I am saying further, from the best information I can obtain, that no one would ever suggest the construction of this line as a colonization road for the opening up of agricultural districts, such as they are, and limited as they are, north of The Pas.

Mr. DUNNING: Not for that alone.

Mr. CAHAN: Not for that alone; that is what I intended to say. Now I have evidence in these reports, and I have had the evidence of those who have been over that line, of one in particular—I am not going to give his name, because it was a confidential inquiry and a confidential answer—that from mile 214, at The Pas, north the entire distance to Port Nelson the line runs through what is largely muskeg.

Mr. BIRD: It is not so.

Mr. CAHAN: A considerable part of this road from mile 214 north is covered with 4 feet of moss on the average.

Mr. DUNNING: My hon. friend is not now quoting any official report.

Mr. CAHAN: I am quoting from the information given me by an engineer who went over that road personally.

Mr. DUNNING: But not from any official report.

Mr. CAHAN: I will prove it pretty largely from Mr. McLachlan before I am through, if necessary.

Mr. DUNNING: Mr. McLachlan never had anything to do with the railway.

Mr. CAHAN: He reported to a considerable extent, and the minister has brought down his estimates, as an engineer, as to the cost of terminals and all that sort of thing.

Mr. DUNNING: My hon. friend is misquoting me there. I produced at no time figures from Mr. McLachlan relating to the railway.

Mr. CAHAN: I am not saying you did. Therefore, do not accuse me of misquoting you.

Mr. DUNNING: I hope my hon. friend will read Hansard to-morrow morning on this point.

Mr. CAHAN: I will, and if I have made a slip, why I certainly take it back. But I am saying this, that your estimates with regard to the terminal and port are within a few thousand dollars of the estimates which were made by Mr. McLachlan several years ago, and which I find in this report. Therefore, I infer that those estimates which were given to the House yesterday with respect to the port terminals are in fact Mr. McLachlan's estimates, and being so, any man who is a competent engineer for the harbour works of the nature and extent contemplated at Port Nelson is quite competent to give evidence with regard to the construction of a railway line over the muskeg which extends for a very considerable distance at least from Port Nelson south.

Mr. CAMPBELL: May I ask if engineer McLachlan reports muskeg on the line of the Hudson Bay railway?

Mr. CAHAN: I will deal with that in a moment. I am saying now that in certain parts on which the line is laid over muskeg, I am told that the subsoil to that muskeg is continuously frozen until the muskeg and moss is removed, and that the embankment then built over that for a considerable section of the 92 miles to Port Nelson has by its own weight sunk down until you cannot see the line because it is engulfed by the mud which the sun has opened up beneath.

Mr. HANNESSON: May not the moss have gathered owing to the delay in construction?

Mr. CAHAN: I have no doubt that the moss has gathered during the one thousand years or perhaps one million years in which we were awaiting railway development there. It undoubtedly did gather there in that time.

Mr. DUNNING: Perhaps my hon. friend would permit a question.

Mr. CAHAN: No, if you will allow me—

Mr. DUNNING: Just in fairness to Mr. McLachlan. My hon. friend does not intend to convey the impression that Mr. McLachlan is the engineering authority responsible for the statements just made by my hon. friend with regard to muskeg along the railway.