

*Hudson Bay Railway*

West in comparison with the contentment of the East. I imagine that the placidity of eastern conditions has been somewhat exaggerated; and I am convinced also that the discontent of the West has been misinterpreted. I think that trivial causes have been alleged to explain that discontent. But the real causes are not trivial; they go to the very roots of western life. The fact is that the West, like every other spot on earth, has been endowed by Providence with certain advantages and certain disadvantages. And this is what has happened. Under the pretext of a national policy, in the name of Canada, we have ruthlessly cut through natural conditions, emphasizing in every case the disadvantage and nullifying the advantage. That is what we have done in the name of a national policy. Shut out absolutely from its natural outlet to the south; its outlet to the east preyed upon by the bold, bad, barons of the "Big Sea-waters", and its only outlet to the north too often made the sport of political caprice, you cannot expect the West to be content under conditions of that kind. No intelligent and vigorous people ever have been content under such conditions. The West suffers from its isolation and it knows it. Buried, so to speak, in the depths of a continent,—people who live in the East cannot realize what this means—and with no outlet to the outside world except such precarious ones as are controlled by other people, how can you expect the West to be content? The sentiment which an isolated people develops towards its natural outlets is the most potent sentiment that can actuate any people; and to tamper with it, to make it a political question, to refuse it in the supposed interest of any other section of Canada, is almost utter recreancy to the best interests of the Dominion as a whole.

We often hear—at least I have heard more often during the past year than ever before—irresponsible talk about separation. There is a stirring in the tops of the mulberry trees which our statesmen would do well to note before it becomes a tornado. Now if, this irresponsible talk be folly, it is only surpassed by one other folly—the constant refusal of this spontaneous and universal aspiration of the West. I repeat, its refusal under any pretext whatsoever is a species of folly that surpasses even the folly that I have mentioned almost under my breath.

Mr. WILLIAM DUFF (Lunenburg): Mr. Speaker, I am sure we have listened with a great deal of interest to the excellent speeches of both the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Knox) and the hon. member for Nelson (Mr. Bird) with regard to the possibilities and

[Mr. Bird.]

the feasibility of the Hudson bay route. Before dealing with the question I should like to say that as far as I am personally concerned I have a great deal of sympathy with the aspirations of the western people. On one subject which is very close to our hearts—the tariff—I think I would go almost as far as they would. I realize too the handicaps under which they suffer by having to bring their grain and other farm products such a long distance by rail to reach the European markets. We in the Maritime provinces suffer just the same in that we are kept out of our great market to the south, with the result that any goods we might find an outlet for in Quebec, Ontario or the western provinces we cannot very well sell on account of the high freight rates. So in any remarks I shall make I want my friends to understand that my sympathies are entirely with the West, and if I thought for one moment that this Hudson bay route was feasible I would support the resolution.

Now, Sir, it seems to me that this matter may be dealt with in three phases. The first is, whether it is feasible to build the line of railway from The Pas to the terminal at Hudson bay. I think everything any government can do should be done for the people of northern Manitoba. If, as the hon. member for Nelson says, there are great possibilities of development in that part of the province, and if it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the railway authorities, of parliament and of the government, that it would be wise for the line to be completed, then I think the work should be undertaken. But I cannot deal with this phase of the question satisfactorily because I do not know very much about it.

The second phase I should like to discuss is the feasibility or otherwise of the water route from the terminals at Port Nelson to Europe. As the hon. members have both said, a great deal has been written in the past two years in regard to this route. The hon. member for Nelson quoted what Captain Anderson, who was out there for several years, wrote with regard to the Hudson bay and strait. I have under my hand his various reports from 1911 to 1915, and I intend to deal with them in a few minutes. The hon. member for Nelson said that some years this route was navigable for four or five months of the year, and he added that during that period whilst one vessel could not get in for a long time another vessel came in a day or two afterwards without any difficulty. If the hon. member had had the slight experience I had in the ice fields for