

*Hudson Bay Railway*

Mr. CLARK: What are these months?

Mr. KNOX: I believe they are July, August, September and October. And I would point out that these are the months during which it would be most beneficial to the western provinces for the route to be open, because it is during this period that the grass-fed cattle, which we hope we shall now be able to ship to the British markets in view of the removal of the embargo, would be ready for shipment overseas. And with the route open during these four months, we should have had during the past season two clear months for the shipment of grain. Grain was going to Port Arthur about the first of September, and if the route were open for these four months that have been mentioned, it will be seen that in the past season we could have had two clear months in which to ship grain. But we believe the route could be kept open much longer than that.

It will be observed that in the resolution I ask that the government shall:

—recognise the priority of this undertaking with reference to other transportation projects started subsequent to the Hudson Bay Railway.

Now it has been suggested to me that some people have interpreted this request to apply to branch lines. I wish to point out at once that I had no reference whatever to branch lines when wording this resolution, because I realize quite well that there are some branch lines in the West that are an absolute necessity at the present time; and I may say that there are some that are urgently needed in the constituency I represent. Although there are no better districts in the West than those which these branch lines would serve, at the same time I must say that unless these people obtain the necessary railway connection they will be compelled to pull up stakes and leave. I have in mind the line running north-east from Prince Albert to Paddockwood, and the line extending from Melfort north-easterly. Let me emphasize the fact that there is no opposition between the branch lines and Hudson Bay line; they are both necessary. And there is no more relationship between these two classes of railways than there is between the branch lines and Welland canal or some of the other big projects which have been started and which are consuming a great amount of money without giving any adequate return. As a matter of fact, the Hudson Bay railway is not in the same position as these other undertakings, for the building of this railway was provided for by the sale of western lands which were especially earmarked for that purpose. The

[Mr KNOX.]

road was intended to be built from the sale of these lands. Whether the proceeds will be enough to complete the project I cannot say, but I know that enough has been raised up to the present practically to cover all expenditures; and we believe that the amount still to be obtained from these sales will pretty nearly provide all that will be required to complete the road. I think that those who try to drag the branch lines into the discussion might just as well come out in their true colours and show themselves as being opposed to the scheme, because there is no connection whatever between the building of branch lines and the completion of this railway.

I have no quarrel with the Vancouver route, because I know that what we want to-day are more outlets. It is imperative that the West especially should have more outlets than it has at present. The cost of getting our produce on the markets of the world is consuming the profits which formerly probably went to the producers. It is therefore absolutely essential that we should get more outlets. I want to say here that in spite of all we are passing through to-day I have every confidence that the West—and when I say the West I include British Columbia—has ahead of it such a future that it will be absolutely necessary to provide more outlets for its products. We know the congested state of the grain route last fall, and we hope that we shall be able in some measure to relieve that condition. It requires no great stretch of imagination on my part to foresee the time when the Pacific ports will not only be used as outlets for our own produce but will be utilized in connection with the trade from the Orient, which will be landed there and transhipped to the port of Nelson and thence across the ocean, thus effecting a saving in both time and expense in getting shipments from the Orient to European ports. The strongest argument in favour of the Hudson bay route in preference to any other is the short railway haul, which is necessarily the cheap haul, and in that connection I might give some of the distances. The distance from Winnipeg to Port Nelson is 892 miles as against a distance from Winnipeg to Montreal of 1,422, which shows a saving of 530 miles. Brandon is 870 miles from Nelson and 1,555 from Montreal, or a difference of 685 miles. Regina is 694 miles from Nelson, via Sturgis—the line is not yet quite completed—and to Montreal it is 1,780 miles, a saving of 1,086. Medicine Hat is 996 miles from Nelson and 2,082 from Montreal, a saving of 1,086 miles. Calgary is