

I am glad to see in his seat. They will be found recorded as quoted in *Hansard* of October 15, 1945, at page 1099. He said:

The policy of the government in the matter of Churchill is to facilitate the use of this port in every way possible.

That would appear to make it unanimous.

This route is a matter of national concern. It is important that this outlet to the world should be available as a means of export and import, even if at the moment it can handle only a mere drop in the bucket of the total wheat export; for that is all that it can do. In spite of some statements to the contrary, it can by no means be considered as an important rival to any other port in Canada; for the amount of grain that it is capable of handling at present is very small in terms of the total export of wheat from this country. The investment of the nation in this railway and port must be preserved.

Much attention has been given to the military significance of the north. I see that at the moment there are 600 armed personnel, including 100 Americans, at Churchill. That is from a dispatch by the Canadian Press of February 12. During the war, emphasis was on Fort Churchill rather than on Port Churchill. I personally would rather see the development of the north on a civilian basis, and I wish to be very clear here that I am not asking for any military development of the north. I would rather see the development of those industries of peace which will one day centre upon that region; such industries as the export of white poplar, the value of which is becoming more and more recognized; the development of mining, the development of a tourist industry, the development perhaps of the oil industry, based upon the prolific white whale; perhaps the establishment even of a reindeer herd. I forget I had promised to keep my feet upon the ground. However, the point I was trying to make is that, if defence is a consideration, then Churchill becomes a place of considerable importance.

Churchill is in the Musk-Ox area; that is, the eastern Canadian arctic. It is the only railhead with continental communications, the only tide-water port with oceanic communications, and also, of course, an air base. I would point out the vulnerability of our single-track trans-continental railways, the vulnerability of the Hudson Bay railway itself. It seems to me that from the military point of view it behooves the Canadian government, and the British government also, to prove once and for all this Hudson bay route, because the fate of a force based upon

Churchill might some day depend upon such knowledge. I presume that we shall preserve at least a part of the Canadian navy we used during the war. The navy will have to manoeuvre somewhere and I suggest that it might very well manoeuvre some time in the waters of the Hudson bay itself. By so doing, it would prove once and for all what the ice and weather conditions on that route are, and this information and knowledge could afterwards be used for commercial and personal purposes.

This is a national question too, in that the proving of the route would open up possibilities of interprovincial trade. I hope there are some of my hon. friends of the maritime provinces listening to what I have to say, because the maritime provinces, rather than setting their face against the whole project, might well consider these possibilities. The prairie provinces could ship to Charlottetown great quantities of feed grain, upon which there could be based a great live stock industry and bacon industry. Nova Scotia lumber companies could export wood pulp through Hudson bay, and were the freight rates equitable and the water route proven, such projects would have a chance to develop. Far eastern and middle western Canada would be brought together as never before, and that is surely desirable from the national viewpoint.

I now come to the recent and current history of the bay route. Let us review what has taken place since the debate in this house in October, 1945. Hon. gentlemen who took part in that debate will remember talk of the setting up of a committee appointed by the governments of the three prairie provinces. I am glad to be able to inform the house that such a committee was formed in July, 1946. It consists of the minister of mines and resources of Manitoba, the minister of railways of Alberta, the minister of cooperation of Saskatchewan, together with two members of the Hudson Bay Route Association. Through this committee the efforts of the provincial governments can be coordinated with those of the federal government in making the most efficient use of the port. This committee in turn set up a continuing technical committee to assemble information and to study the whole question of the use of the port. This committee of economists from the three provinces met in October, 1946, in Winnipeg and subsequently in Regina in November, 1946, and in January, 1947. The committee did, and is doing, valuable work, investigating such matters as the possible length of the shipping season, navigation aids, operation and administration of the Hudson