

P. E. I. - N. B. Tunnel Project Debated Since 1884

Last Survey Was Promised During 1944

In the long controversy waged since Confederation over Prince Edward Island's winter transportation problem, a new note was sounded in 1884 when Senator G.W. Howland proposed a tunnel under the Northumberland Strait in the Tormentine-Traverser stretch.

Following this up, in 1886, Government engineers made a survey of the rock formation in the bottom of the Strait. The survey proved that such a project was technically possible. But nothing was done, though a second, confirming survey was made in 1887.

In 1891 the tunnel idea popped up again, this time as a result of a detailed survey and report made by Sir Douglas Fox. He gave specifications and considered that a tunnel 16 feet in diameter could be built for \$11,262,500. But again the project went no further than plans.

Successive failures to provide satisfactory roadboat service gave the tunnel idea another flurry on March 1, 1906, when a provincial resolution called upon the Federal Government to "fulfill the terms of union by causing a tunnel to be constructed at the earliest possible moment."

War-time Survey

Again the tunnel scheme flared up until reawakened after the loss of the S.S. "Charlottetown" and the one delay in getting work started on her successor. The tunnel possibility was freely discussed at the 1942 and 1944 sessions of the Legislature and on April 10, 1944, Transport Minister Michaud announced at Ottawa that Messrs. D.W. McLellan, experimental consultant, engineer, and R.S. LeMontreal, consulting engineer, would make an on-the-spot survey in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

The Minister's announcement added: "Construction of a proposed tunnel between Charlottetown and Cape Jourdain appears to be of doubtful possibility. The main depth at which work would have to be executed between these two points cannot be less than 131 feet while the report on the proposal submitted by Sir Douglas Fox in 1891 placed the depth at 146 feet.

"Engineering practice has not yet provided means whereby men could work in compressed air compartments beyond a greater depth than 115 feet. Since no one can guarantee that a tunnel could be constructed under the Northumberland Strait using compressed air, this project would appear impracticable at that location."

Dr. Grant's Advocacy

A strong advocate of the tunnel proposal at this time was Dr. T.V. Grant, M.P. for King's, who in a letter to the local press on March 18, 1944, stated:

"If every man and woman, boy and girl in Prince Edward Island would rise up in unison and demand a tunnel—a tunnel as the only feasible remedy—then, and not until then, would our claims be given consideration and this wasteful expenditure of public money on piers and ships that has been going on for over half a century would cease and the tunnel would be undertaken."

Dr. Grant spoke to the same effect in the Budget debate in Parliament that year.

Delayed Fulfillment Of Confederation Compact

Continued from Page 11.

Two-thirds as much per carload for transport between these points as Halifax merchants pay for transport to or from Chicago, a distance of 1,500 miles. And no one knows from hour to hour whether freight, passengers or mails must next be routed to their destination by way of Georgetown or Summerside, the Capes or Charlottetown. These are some of the conditions after thirty-three years of nominal union with Canada, during which years our people have paid millions upon millions in taxes to build railways and canals in the West, to open up and develop Prairie Country and the Yukon and to give those distant regions facilities for trade and transportation denied to ourselves. We cannot go on this way. To do so is to consent to slow and painful suicide. Prince Edward Island must be treated as other provinces of the family are treated or she will withdraw from the family."

Borden's Promise

Thus matters went their way until the famous election of 1911. During the campaign Robert Borden, leader of the Conservative Party, then in Opposition to the Laurier Government visited the Island. Speaking at Charlottetown, on September 11, he said: "I promise you that, if in my power after the 21st instant—and at present I have reason to believe such will be the case—that I will, with as little delay as possible, cause such action to be taken as will settle this question. I will remove as far as possible the disadvantage of your present communications and make an honest effort to give you in this connection what you expected to receive when you joined this great Confederation."

This was the noted Borden promise for a railway ferry or a tunnel, both of which were at that time much in the news, particularly the former. An effort was made to label the Borden promise a "political bribe," but the Charlottetown Guardian pointed out that "not the eve of the election Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Hon. Mr. Fielding came here and were as dumb as oysters in regard to either the tunnel or the car ferry."

And on December 28, 1911, Premier Borden was as good as his promise. He announced that "the Government is determined to undertake the establishment of a car ferry service." The S.S. Prince Edward Island, first railway ferry, was delivered in December, 1915, and operated the Charlottetown-Pictou route that winter.

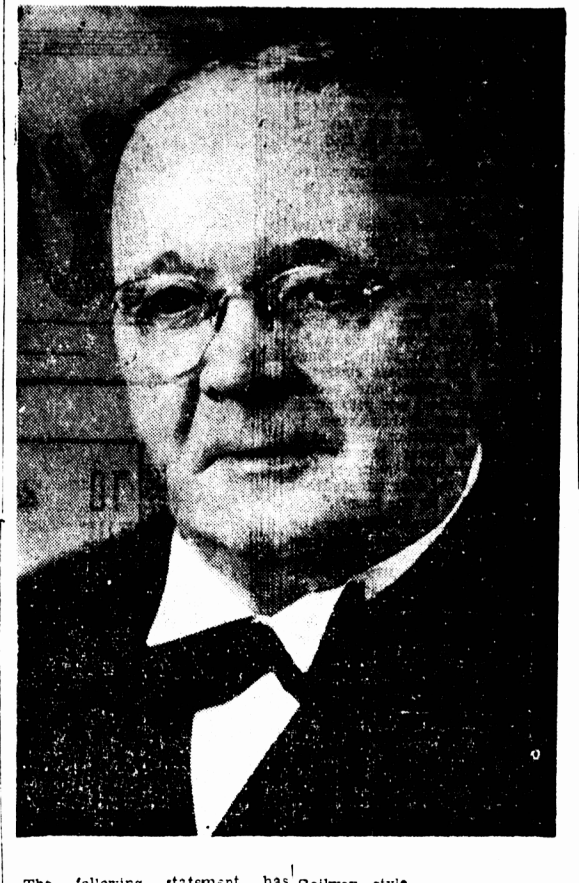
On October 15, 1917, the S.S. Prince Edward Island made its first scheduled revenue trip to a new port made on the island, a port named in honor of the man who fulfilled the Confederation contract—Borden.

However, turned "thumbs down" to the project, when he announced, in an interview given at Halifax on March 9, 1945, that of the two proposals "the car ferry system seems to be the most practical."

He added, however, that "none of the post-war projects have been definitely decided upon, agreed upon or mapped out."

There, for the present, the matter rests. The results, if any, of the survey made by the Government engineers have not been disclosed. But it would be rash to assume that the tunnel idea is dead, or even moribund. It will no doubt be revived and may even prove to be an immortal transportation problem.

Lieut. - Governor Recalls Ice - Boat Crossing Days In Praising New Service



The following statement has been received for publication from His Honour Lieutenant Governor J.A. Bernard.

"The inauguration of the new car ferry 'Abegweit' must be regarded as one of the great marks of progress in our transportation system from and to Prince Edward Island. With the arrival of her, has been a long time the largest, most powerful, and most up-to-date ice breaker ever constructed, we are provided with the necessary means of moving our export products to outside markets and of bringing in our imports."

"Built in a Canadian shipyard by Canadian workmen, and in so far as possible of Canadian products, she is a credit to her builders, while she brings vividly to our minds the knowledge that our engineers at home are as capable as can be found anywhere."

"In my younger days I had the privilege of crossing the Strait by ice boat from Cape Tormentine to Cape Traverser and the memory of that trip is still with me. Leaving Tormentine at 7:00 a.m. we arrived at Cape Traverser at 8:00 p.m., tired, wet, cold and hungry. Today in the luxurious, speedy and powerful 'Abegweit' less than an hour is required to cover the same distance, while comfort and accommodation make it a 'joy-ride', and a restaurant is ready to cater on the trip to over 300 people in the intimate Canadian National Railway style."

"We of Prince Edward Island feel justified in congratulating the Honourable Minister of Transport for his interest in our wants, as well as for maintaining obligations contracted for many years ago. Travelling public, tourists and visitors to our Province will be agreeably surprised with the new car ferry, and though the wait for her has been a long one I feel that we will enjoy and appreciate all the more readily the service she will give because of the adverse conditions of the past several years. She will be manned by a captain and crew who have had a years of successful operational experience in these waters."

"Upon the Deteriorating of our railway, soon to be completed, I compliment the President, Vice President, and local Superintendent of Canadian National Railways and all officers who took part or assisted in making this an actuality. It is the greatest forward move ever made in connection with railroading here, and will speed up to a great extent the transportation problems of passengers and freight. These much delayed improvements speak in terms of action, and our citizens are happy to know that their hopes are being realized. With the new car ferry 'Abegweit' in actual operation a long felt want in our travel movement will be consummated, while the Diesel engines will bring to us a service such as is enjoyed by railway patrons in more populous centres of the world."

Crew Required For "Abegweit"

The following questions and answers regarding the crew required on the S.S. "Abegweit" appeared in the votes and proceedings of the House of Commons of recent date. The answers were given by Hon. Lionel Chevrier, Minister of Transport in reply to questions by Mr. W. Chester S. McLure:

1. What number of crew will be required for the S.S. Abegweit?
2. How many qualified captains?
3. Will any of the officers and crew of the S.S. Prince Edward be transferred to the S.S. Abegweit?
4. If so, what officers will be so transferred?
5. How many engineers of S.S. Prince Edward hold qualified certificates for the S.S. Abegweit?
6. Will the S.S. Prince Edward be kept fully manned as assistant ship for the service?
7. When will the crew of the S.S. Abegweit be given training for their new positions?
8. How long will this training be required?
9. How many guarantee engineers or other officers from the ship builders is required by law?
10. How long will such guarantee officers remain on ship?

Answers

The Canadian National Railways advise as follows:—

1. Approximately 80, assuming three shifts operated.
2. (a) Two captains, (b) 78 of other ranks. Working in shifts.
3. Yes.
4. Two Masters, one First Officer, one Second Officer, two Third Officers, one Junior Second Engineer, one Third Engineer, three Fourth Engineers, one Electrical Engineer and one Chief Steward.
5. Six.
6. No, but will be stand-by ship and manned without delay when required.
7. Deck officers, Engineering officers and Chief Steward now being trained. Chief Engineer and



CAPT. JOHN L. READ Former master of the Prince Edward Island and Charlottetown.

Chief Electrician have been on ship since construction started.

8. Until ship goes into service. Insofar as the Department of Transport is concerned.

9. None, by law. However, under Contract No. 35497 between the Department of Transport and Marine Industries Limited, one guarantee engineer is to be appointed by the contractor to serve on board. In addition under an agreement between Dominion Engineering Works Limited and Canadian General Electric Company Limited a guarantee engineer with respect to electrical installation is also to be appointed.

10. No longer than twelve months from date of delivery.

11. None.

CHARACTERISTICS

(Continued from page 1)

2000 tons.

Railway car tracks—3 lines

Railway cars carried—19 weighing 1,200 tons.

Automobiles and trucks carried—60 weighing 90 tons.

Passengers carried—950.

Crew carried—66

Emergency sleeping quarters

Islanders Remember How Borden Kept His Promise

It was on September 11, 1911 that Hon. Robert L. Borden, leader of the Conservative Opposition in the House of Commons, speaking in a Charlottetown audience specifically promised either a tunnel or a railway car ferry for Prince Edward Island if he won the Federal election campaign then in progress.

Many promises regarding transportation improvements have been made to this Province, before and since that time; but Borden's assurance stands out for the prompt and faithful manner in which it was implemented.

On December 28, 1911, in a letter to Mr. A.A. MacLean, M.P. Charlottetown, Prime Minister Borden wrote:

"The Government has determined to undertake the establishment of a Government ferry service between the Island and the mainland. This will involve changing from narrow to standard gauge on the Island railway."

In a February 14, 1912 dispatch from Ottawa, the Province was informed that the Federal Government would spend \$1,304,000 improving the Island transportation system. This included \$450,000 for a car ferry and \$400,000 for enlarging the gauge of the P.E.I. railway.

Despite the intervention of World War I, in December, 1915, the S.S. "Prince Edward Island" capable of carrying 12 railway cars and 40 automobiles, was finally delivered. During the 1915-16 and 1916-17 winters it was operated on the Charlottetown-Pictou route. In three two years the New Brunswick-Prince Edward Island terminals were made ready. The Tormentine-Traverser route had been out, all-fully modified. At Charlottetown, two miles west of Traverser, a new port was built. It was called Borden in honour of the man who had redeemed his promise and bestowed upon the Island its first regular winter-summer communication with the mainland.

Up till 1919, standard gauge cars were brought to Borden by the railway ferry where they were placed on a siding and the freight transferred to the narrow gauge cars. On Sept. 24, 1919, the standard gauge line between Borden and Charlottetown was completed. The entire Island railway standardization was finally finished in September, 1930.

(costs)—100 passengers.

Lifesaving facilities—8 metal lifeboats, fitted under mechanical davits, each capable of accommodating 48 persons. Also a large number of buoyant apparatus and other lifesaving appliances, as required by the statutory regulations.

Restaurant facilities—75 persons per sitting; 300 per hour.

Navigation aids—Radar, radio telephone, echo sounder, gyro compass, etc.

Collective power of propelling machinery—12,000 h.p.p.

Diesel-electric propelling generators—8 sets, each consisting of one engine rated 1500 h.p.p. at 360 i.p.m. driving a 1650 k.w. 325 volt generator.

Propulsion motors—4 rated at 3850 h.p. 560 volts.

Diesel-electric auxiliary generators—3 rated at 500 h.p.p. 360 r.p.m. driving at 330 k.w. 225 volts D.C. generator.

Auxiliary service motors—135.

Number of propellers—4 (two 8 ft and two forward).

Diameter of propellers—13 feet (four blades).

Weight of propellers—15 tons each.

LEARN INDIAN LORE

Native Indians taught the white man to catch oysters with a forked stick.

"KNOW - HOW"

The hard-won skill and knowledge of thousands of Canadians went into the building of our new Carferry. Scientists and Research Laboratories, Engineers in many industries, artisans and labourers, calling on the experience of the years, and tapping Canada's great national resources for raw material created the new ship. These Canadians had special knowledge—they had the "KNOW - HOW".

SO AS A PRODUCT OF CANADIAN BRAINS AND INITIATIVE

We Salute The "ABEGWEIT"

To meet high Canadian standards, every product worthy of its name must have "KNOW-HOW" behind it. Any good product does not just happen.

Perfection

ICE CREAM

served on the new "Abegweit" represents the study and findings of several generations of Dairy Scientists. Its quick freezing is a development of scientific research. Its purity and sanitary processing, including pasteurizing, meets all health tests. It is made from rich Island cream. It is a "KNOW-HOW" product.

Manufactured by

Central Creameries Ltd.

Summerside CHARLOTTETOWN, Souris.

Check Up On Your Car For Vacation Trip



Perhaps you will be planning a motor trip via the new Car Ferry "Abegweit". Be prepared and when you plan that vacation jaunt, let us guard your car's mileage with frequent inspections and timely attention to needed adjustments and repairs.

HORNE MOTORS KENT STREET