

Royal Commission

(Continued from page six) think always the result. If the regulations were made statutory I should think it would be a great relief to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, because he would avoid requests for extensions from politicians who, of course, wish to gratify a few of their constituents.

THE CHAIRMAN: To gratify constituents; so altruistic as that? MR. TIDMARSH: Yes. He thinks he is gratifying them; but in most cases it turns out to be exactly the reverse.

COMMISSIONER WALLACE asked if there might not be special occasions, when, by reason of continuous stormy weather, the ordinary period of fishing would be shortened as to really deprive the fishermen of a fair opportunity during that year. If the rule were made inflexible the Minister could not interfere, even in a necessary case.

MR. TIDMARSH replied that the regulations should be based on the general average conditions. If there is a year when fishing operations are interrupted by storms and a lot of gear is destroyed, the fishermen receive the benefit next year by having a larger catch. He would like to see the statutory provision such that no one could interfere with it, not even the Minister. Interruption of fishing operations by storms is perhaps nature's method of protecting the fishery.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you not attributing too much to the intervention of Providence? MR. TIDMARSH: I would not say it was specially designed by Providence to protect the fisheries, but they act in that way.

Continuing, Mr. Tidmarsh also cited regulations respecting canning, which, though on the statutes, are not enforced. The fishery officers have made suggestions to certain canners, and these canners on their own responsibility have put into effect those regulations; but those who have failed to do that are not compelled to. He was not finding much fault with the officials. There were other causes.

THE CHAIRMAN: What are the other causes? MR. TIDMARSH: Probably political interference.

THE CHAIRMAN: You must let us have the full truth. You fear political interference? MR. TIDMARSH: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you give us any example of that? MR. TIDMARSH: In my position I would not care to give an example.

COMMISSIONER WALLACE: We do not want names at all. MR. TIDMARSH: Well, take an illustration for example. Factories are supposed to be kept absolutely clean. They are supposed to be whitewashed every year, and floors are to be water tight.

THE CHAIRMAN: Tell us in what respect these regulations have not been fulfilled, and why? MR. TIDMARSH: It is difficult for me to tell you what I would like.

THE CHAIRMAN: And it is awfully difficult for me to believe that political interference can take place with the administration of

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regulations. I am not accustomed to that.

MR. TIDMARSH: Suppose I say there are canneries operating in Prince Edward Island that have not conformed to the regulations as provided by Order in Council, and that the Government officials have not insisted on those regulations being enforced.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not definite enough. Since you mention political interference, I want you to give us more direct evidence of it. So many persons tell us these things in private, and we cannot find any person courageous enough to tell us in public. There is no use in people whispering in our ear.

MR. TIDMARSH: What you want is a concrete case, and I am not in a position to give you that concrete case.

THE CHAIRMAN: A few minutes ago, slightly below your breath, you said, "I am not flaming the officials; it is the politicians." That was intended to convey to me a suggestion that there is political interference if it was not intended to convey that impression I cannot see what meaning it had. You realize my position I cannot take that without something to base it on.

MR. TIDMARSH: You must also realize that I am placed in a very difficult position. While I know these things, it is very difficult to define a case.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I will take no notice of that insinuation at all. MR. TIDMARSH: I believe it, nevertheless.

THE CHAIRMAN: You can go on believing what you like. I shall take no notice of it.

Continuing, Mr. Tidmarsh discussed the matter of scientific research along educational lines which the Federal Government might take up with respect to fisheries. Also Federal aid directed to the proper expansion and development of the industry, the proper appointment of guardians, etc. He explained that the prevalent opinion one time had been expressed upon the employment of Royal Canadian Mounted police to enforce fishery regulations. Two or three of these men were sent to the island and they very soon stopped illegal practices; but they were withdrawn. He charged that in New Brunswick the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, in a campaign speech, promised the fishermen he would withdraw the Mounted Police in that section, and that they would not return again during his term of office.

THE CHAIRMAN: Give us the reference to that speech and look it up for us, will you? MR. TIDMARSH: It was made in Gloucester County, New Brunswick.

THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot go searching through the newspaper records for that. MR. TIDMARSH: I will endeavor to get you a copy.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That may throw some light on the kind of thing you have in mind. Did I understand it as part of your suggestion that if experienced people were appointed to the force they might combine educational work with their duties?

MR. TIDMARSH: Not the guardians. I had in mind the principal officials like the Chief Inspector and his assistants. I think they could. They should be men of fairly good education.

THE CHAIRMAN: I take it Mr. Tidmarsh, that you regard the freight rate case as significantly covered by the evidence taken at Halifax? MR. TIDMARSH: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: But instead of having a Deputy Minister you would prefer to have a Commission for the Maritime Provinces alone?

MR. TIDMARSH: Yes, for the Maritimes at least. I think in all fishery countries, such as England, France, and Norway, fisheries are managed by Commissions, and the same thing applies in the United States.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would this fishery board for the Maritime Provinces be a permanent board? MR. TIDMARSH: I would suggest a permanent board.

THE CHAIRMAN: Maintained by the Federal Government? MR. TIDMARSH: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: What exactly is this suggestion in the last paragraph, Mr. Tidmarsh: "In conclusion I would suggest the advisability of appointing a Commission of experts to investigate the natural resources, marine and otherwise, of the Maritime Provinces and when these potential resources are determined, it should be incumbent upon the inhabitants to have faith in their Province and its resources and their own ability to develop them."

MR. TIDMARSH: What I mean is to have an industrial commission appointed to find out what the natural resources are. Take for example canneries, marine and otherwise, of the Province to put in place in Canada or United States where peas and beans grow better than here. Suppose a very profitable canning industry could be started in those products. We do not know definitely whether it would be profitable to establish an industry; nor do we know, except by mere supposition, whether it could be carried on extensively enough to warrant the investment of capital required to develop it. If we had an industrial commission to investigate that for us it would then be incumbent on the people of the Province to put up the necessary funds, and to have faith in their resources. I give that just as one instance.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it unreasonable to ask of the inhabitants of the Province, those who are interested in these matters themselves, to investigate? On what principle are you suggesting that it is the business of a Federal Government to prospect the land and advise all and sundry if they have not the initiative to be able to make it a profitable enterprise?

MR. TIDMARSH: Well, there is large assistance given in other countries.

THE CHAIRMAN: Where? MR. TIDMARSH: I have in mind the establishment of the pea and bean industry in the State of Maine.

THE CHAIRMAN: Was that all done by the Government? MR. TIDMARSH: Not entirely, but the Government instructed parties who were about to embark on the enterprise and tested the soil.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did they do that at the request of these parties? MR. TIDMARSH: I think so. That was the government's idea, and the State government advised them. They kept their men there during the whole season, from the time the peas were planted until they were canned.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does that not make a difference? I would wonder where under your proposal business initiative starts.

MR. TIDMARSH: That suggestion of mine is not entirely original. It has been discussed before in the Maritime Provinces, about having an industrial commission to investigate possibilities of industrial development, in the fisheries. I think it would be difficult to ascertain the kinds of fish we have in our waters. I do there are large scallop beds in the vicinity of Prince Edward Island, but we do not know how large they are or where they are located. The Government has done some work in Nova Scotia. I do not know what has been done in connection with agriculture.

THE CHAIRMAN: I can understand the Government being asked, in so far as they possess natural resources, to see if they are of such value as to justify persons engaging in an enterprise of that kind; for instance, to see whether they own mineral resources in coal, oil, gold or silver. But you are suggesting a much wider thing than that. You are suggesting that the Government should make a general investigation into the possibilities of business being conducted in these three Provinces in all the possible lines of business. On what principle are you proceeding?

MR. TIDMARSH: On the principle that general profit might accrue to the Maritime Provinces and incidentally to the Dominion as a whole from the development of industries that might be practical in these Provinces.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the principle? MR. TIDMARSH: Yes. Whether it is sound or not I do not profess to say.

THE CHAIRMAN: We will consider it. I am very much indebted to you for your evidence, Mr. Tidmarsh. Before you go, Dr. McMillan draws my attention to the fact that there is a station at St. Andrews.

MR. TIDMARSH: That is a biological station. It is more in connection with the study of biology of fish than application to practical purposes.

MR. JOHN AGNEW the next witness, gave the experience of himself and family last spring while returning from the mainland, when they had been unable to secure reliable information as to the movements of trains between Sackville and Tormentine, and were forced to remain over at Sackville at a time when his daughter, who was with the party, was seriously ill.

He described in detail the inconveniences along the route until their arrival at Charlottetown at two o'clock in the morning. He contended that full information should have been supplied at Montserrat which would have enabled them to wait there until the trains were moving regularly.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think you were entitled to receive it. Does that occur often? MR. AGNEW: It occurs very often, especially in the spring of the year.

THE CHAIRMAN: What do you think it is due to? Is it just ordinary negligence on the part of lower officials? MR. AGNEW: Well, it is very difficult to get the information. It is very difficult here to get it, sometimes, when a train is coming in. You may have to wait half an hour longer.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is this kind of thing unusual on Canadian Railways? MR. AGNEW: It is quite usual with us. I think it is unusual on the mainland. We stayed a couple of months this winter at a place in Ontario and there were four fast trains to Toronto every day. It was 132 miles east of Toronto, and they made the journey in three and one half hours. It is 86 miles from Sackville to Charlottetown and it takes five and a half hours. I think it is ridiculous to see that treatment.

THE CHAIRMAN: Tell me exactly what you want. MR. AGNEW: What I would like to see is a fast train that would go right down to Tormentine from Sackville, connecting with the boat.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is a fast train something different from an express train? MR. AGNEW: Yes, it does not stop at all the little stations.

THE CHAIRMAN: What about the other people, from Sackville to Tormentine? MR. AGNEW: They have the ordinary train.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there sufficient traffic to justify a fast train such as you suggest? MR. AGNEW: I think there would be if they had accommodation. The great trouble with the tourists is that there is no accommodation from Sackville.

THE CHAIRMAN: You look upon the journey from Sackville to the island as a lot of an ordeal. MR. AGNEW: That is it.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the general idea? MR. AGNEW: Yes. After coming from New York, or Montreal, or Toronto, they have to face this getting redress, when you come here.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you lodge any complaint about the information you had received from this ticket agent on the occasion you mention particularly? MR. AGNEW: No, because it was a general thing. We can't even tell on the island, when we call anything of it now; we take it for granted. We call up information at the railway station and they tell us the train will be coming at a certain time, and it may not come for another hour.

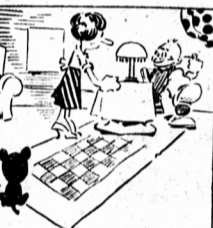
THE CHAIRMAN: Has the opinion similar, to my knowledge, been up before them lots of to do with the uncertain time? MR. AGNEW: She makes very of a trip, and it is an ordeal. Another good trip, when there is ice. She gives from Montreal to Charlottetown, is very good satisfaction.

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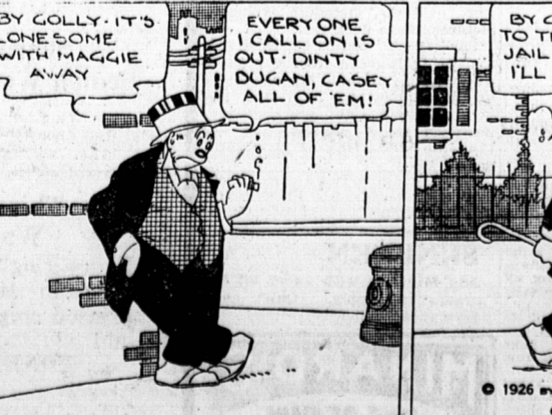


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