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ROYAL COMMISSION CONTINUES EVIDENCE

The Need of a Second Car Ferry and Better Train Service is Ably Given Before Royal Commission Under Sir Andrew Rae Duncan.

Continuation of the evidence taken before the Royal Commission (Sir Andrew Rae Duncan, chairman) sitting at Charlottetown on Friday and Saturday last.

MR. J. O. HYNDMAN, president of the Associated Boards of Trade of P. E. Island, the next witness, suggested that the question of Maritime rights had not perhaps been defined in this Province as in some others.

THE CHAIRMAN: What are they Mr. Hyndman?

MR. HYNDMAN: So far as the Island is concerned, they might be defined in part as a right we would have to expect to have the terms of Confederation fulfilled as regards transportation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do Maritime rights begin and end there?

MR. HYNDMAN: I say so far as the Island is concerned. Until the car ferry came into operation we had a very uncertain service. For many winters they had to resort to crossing between the Capes with little ice boats. To have the lady passengers and the mails and baggage carried across, you paid the Dominion Government for that privilege, and the men passengers helped the crew in hauling the boat. Sir Robert Borden made the statement that the terms of Confederation had not been honored, that Prince Edward Island had not been treated fairly by either Liberal or Conservative Governments in the matter of transportation, and that it was not a matter of cost but a matter of honor. When the car ferry was put on the route in 1926, it was largely as an experiment. Very few people at the time thought a boat could be built that could navigate the Straits during the winter season. This car ferry has proven a very successful experiment in negotiating the ice in winter, but when she was built there were matters at that time that were not thought of. For instance, the automobile traffic.

THE CHAIRMAN: Had you no knowledge of automobiles in Prince Edward Island in 1916?

MR. HYNDMAN: No. For some years automobiles were prohibited in this Province. Now that boat today is inadequate to take care of the traffic of this Province, and I think you might hear a statement that was filed with the Railway last winter dealing with the car ferry. I prepared this and presented it at the time to the Railway officials. You asked a question today of one or two of the witnesses if they had presented claims in connection with our difficulties to the railway authorities. I may say that I have been to the railways, and before the Board of Railway Commissioners, at different times, presenting these matters. We have had difficulties continually with transportation right through from Sackville. We have been pressing year in and year out for relief, and we do not seem to make very much progress. You asked a while ago if anything has been presented to the officials in regard to tourists coming here. I will quote, from a report of 1924. We formed a Tourist Association in 1923. We felt that it was useless to endeavor to bring tourists to this Province with the facilities then in effect, and we had a conference with the railway officials, and I will read an extract from what occurred at that conference. Mr. L. S. Brown, general manager at Moncton, Mr. Weldon, the traffic manager, Mr. Barker, and other railway officials came here at that time. Twenty members attended and brought up the matter of the Province-wide endeavor put forward by the Tourist Association with a view to bringing a large number of tourists to the Province that season. We stressed the importance of giving to the Island the passenger train service received by the other Provinces, and the delegates were assured that this matter would be taken up with the Board, and that next year would see a definite improvement in the passenger service.

THE CHAIRMAN: Who stated that?

MR. HYNDMAN: Mr. L. S. Brown, the general manager for the Atlantic region. We stated to these officials that we might as well scrap our Tourist Association as to attempt to bring tourists here with the conditions that existed. I am in touch with many tourists coming here, and I hear complaints, more than others probably would, that are continually made both in regard to the freight and passenger service. I have never met a tourist who came to the Island yet who did not complain. We have had members of Parliament, Senators and others who have said, "Why do you allow this condition to exist? We wouldn't stand it in the West; there would be a rebellion." They love our little Island, they find it a real delight to spend a vacation here, — but never gain do they want the experience of getting over to the Island and back again. Recently, only within a few weeks, coming over here as late as June 29th, it was a bit rough and when they arrived at Borden they could not land. There was a bit of a storm on, and the seas were coming up, and they kept the passengers on. Then they decided to take them below and put them off from there. They got in about two o'clock in the morning. One lady who made the trip said to me, "Never again will I bring my children to Prince Edward Island if I must endure such an experience as that."

THE CHAIRMAN: You do not blame the railway company for the storm?

MR. HYNDMAN: No, but if we had the service we should have they wouldn't notice the storm. They would come through in their cars.

THE CHAIRMAN: But wait a moment. These people had to get on the boat?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes, they got off the cars at Tormentine, and got on the boat, and they came off and had to get on the cars again; but if a through train were put on they would not have this inconvenience. We have been advocating right along a through service. I have a resolution here that was passed at the Maritime Board of Trade meeting, representing the whole Maritime Provinces, back as far as 1919, and I will be glad to file it with you. It will give you some idea of what we have been pressing for. It is to the effect that "whereas the Province of Prince Edward Island has suffered greatly for many years past from inferior passenger service on the car ferry as well as at the connecting points on the mainland, and whereas the car ferry service forms the connecting link thus making it possible for Prince Edward Island to receive an adequate service, and whereas the many inconveniences and delays in travelling to and from the Island in the past have caused inconvenience to the travelling public and interfered greatly with the tourist trade.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is this a resolution you are reading?

MR. HYNDMAN: This is the resolution, passed as far back as 1919. "And whereas Prince Edward Island has become part of the Canadian National System, the travelling public are entitled to equal service when travelling to and from parts of the Canadian National Railways as regards both class of car and speed; and whereas as it is now possible to run standard gauge car on the railways of the Island; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Board strongly recommend to the management that Prince Edward Island be granted up to date service in every particular including the transfer of passenger cars on the ferry, so that passengers will be carried through to destination." That was carried unanimously.

THE CHAIRMAN: What happened after the resolution was passed?

MR. HYNDMAN: It was filed with the management at Moncton and with the Railway Department at Ottawa, but nothing has been done.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you seriously expect that anything would be done by merely sending in a resolution?

MR. HYNDMAN: No, we have been carrying that through to our members of Parliament.

THE CHAIRMAN: Didn't you follow that up by oral representations to the railway company?

MR. HYNDMAN: We did. I have taken that before various bodies.

THE CHAIRMAN: But did the Maritime conference of the Boards of Trade appoint a deputation to go to interview the railway company with that resolution?

MR. HYNDMAN: I am quite sure they followed that up,—the secretary ;that would be his duty.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you appoint at that meeting a deputation to prooceed to interview the railway authorities?

MR. HYNDMAN: Not particularly at that meeting, no.

THE CHAIRMAN: I hould have thought that would be the first step. I am not surprised if railway managers pay no attention to resolutions coming in like that. I should have thought the Maritime Boards of Trade, if they regarded it as a serious matter, would have appointed a deputation to wait upon the railway company.

MR. HYNDMAN: I have no doubt that was done, but I cannot say positively that it was.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you cannot say, positively, I must assume that it was not done.

MR. HYNDMAN: We wanted that passed ourselves, and we followed that up from here, through the Charlottetown Board of Trade. I might say that before the car ferry was put on the question of a tunnel was talked of time and again. At every election they were talking tunnel, and an estimate was made of fifty to seventy-five millions to build a tunnel. I claimed that the car ferry would serve the purpose and would take the place of a tunnel, and the expense is small in comparison. But while the "Prince Edward Island" is a satisfactory boat, she is not adequate today. We have the statement of Captain Read that that boat is not the boat that he would like.

THE CHAIRMAN: You know who Captain Read is, but I do not.

MR. HYNDMAN: He is the captain of the car ferry .

THE CHAIRMAN: Take the pains to tell me these little things. Are you now going to read the statement made by Capt. Read, the master of the ferry?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are we having the pleasure of seeing Capt. Read here, Mr. McKinnon, do you know?

MR. MCKINNON: We have not definite word that he will be here.

MR. HYNDMAN: The car ferry "Prince Edward Island" was put on the present route as an experiment and has filled the purpose, demonstrating that a car ferry can be built that will meet all the requirements. We cannot do better in this regard than quote Capt John L. Read, master of the car ferry, who in a letter to the press in the winter of 1923 stated the following:—

"Still another reason why we should proceed with caution, is that the present boat is only an experiment, and we are learning more about her defects every year. Last winter we never missed a trip, and everyone had about made up their mind that the car ferry left nothing to be desired, except that a duplicate boat be built, Already this one has proven that she is not at all suitable to keep up the service in a real hard winter, and I for one am not satisfied with her, for she has neither the shape nor the power to give satisfaction, and I am sure that had she been shaped like the "Earl Gray" with the exception of her bow, and with more power, there would have been a different story to tell. We should demand a larger and better boat, with more beam, capable of having three tracks to carry 20 cars, instead of 12, and with double the power of this boat."

THE CHAIRMAN: Is Capt. Read an officer of the company?

MR. HYNDMAN: He is an official of the C. N. R. and the master of the car ferry.

THE CHAIRMAN: And he thinks you need another boat?

MR. HYNDMAN: He takes that view. The car ferry is not adequate. We are asked occasionally in the Board of Trade,—we were approached last year by Capt. Read, asking if we would not agree to have the second passenger trip withdrawn in October, to allow the movement of freight when shipments commence. If we permitted that, we might as well say we will discard our passenger and mail service altogether, and adopt a flying machine for the mails.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why?

MR. HYNDMAN: Once we discard the second passenger trip we miss connection with the Ocean Limited, and passengers would be detained at Sackville over 22 hours.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you had the choice of one or two trips, could you not choose that trip which would make the connection?

MR. HYNDMAN: That would be the night trip and they are all anxious to get clear of the night trip. Later in the season we brought this before the Railway Commission, and asked for a continuance at least later than we got it last year up till November. When the boat went on at first we stopped in October, and did not commence until the 6th May on her second trip . That gave us a worse service than we had before the car ferry came on. The boats that used to come down ran right up to Christmas, and we could get our mails through more quickly. We therefore contend that with the increase of freight traffic, and increase of passenger and automobile traffic ,the car ferry at present does not by any means serve the business of the Province.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you any statistics to show us what the traffic is?

MR. HYNDMAN: The only way would be to get them from the Railway. I have found great difficulty in getting information of that kind from the Railway.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you ever consulted an engineer as to the practicability of the present arangements?

MR. HYNDMAN: We haven't got any reports.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why?

MR. HYNDMAN: That is a matter that should be dealt with, no doubt, but we have been looking to our members of Parliament and in other ways trying to have these matters adjusted, feeling that we had a claim that should receive attention.

THE CHAIRMAN: But apparently you have never tested the real substance of your claim.

MR. HYNDMAN: It seems self evident to us. I have never crossed over to Tormentine and gone up that line that was really, well,— I have been ashamed to travel with people from outside, coming and going, and to say that I was a Prince Edward Islander. You would think we were a lot of outcasts.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would not take it quite so seriously.

MR. HYNDMAN: We do feel it so.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you feel it so, why have you not taken the precaution of getting a sound practical engineer to make a report to you, first of all, as to whether this particular arrangement is an up-to-date one; and secondly, if it is, whether it is being worked in anything like an efficient way?

MR. HYNDMAN: That is a good suggestion and I thank you for it, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am surprised that it had not occurred to you long ago.

MR. HYNDMAN: We felt that it was up to our members of Parliament.

THE CHAIRMAN: You might trust yourselve a little more. If you think of your members of Parliament a little less, you might make more progress. You see, your evidence is all quite useful so far as the general feeling of the community or of visitors is concerned, but it is not of much use to us from a practical point of view.

MR. HYNDMAN: I can quite understand that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think you had better leave that point to be dealt with by the engineer, whom I understand we are to have the advantage of hearing tomorrow.

MR. HYNDMAN: Then there is the question of a ferry substitute. If anything happens this boat we have no substitute, except this scow the "Scotia!"

THE CHAIRMAN: What scow is that? I have never heard of her.

MR. HYNDMAN: It is our only substitute car ferry; an open boat, with no deck accommodation. I think our friend Dr. Mc McMillan here has had experience of her.

THE CHAIRMAN: I should not have to rely on my colleague Dr. McMillan to get evidence that should be given to the Commission here, in Prince Edward Island. What is the "Scotia?"

MR. HYNDMAN: She is a steamboat, a scow run by steam, built to run the railway cars on, and brought into use if anything goes wrong with the ferry. She was formerly operated at Mulgrave.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does she take motor cars as well?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: There are two sets of rails?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes, she was specially fitted, and there was considerable expenditure on her, and the docks,—I think $75,000—to enable her to fit in when the "Prince Edward Island" was away for repairs. We contend that that boat is not a suitable substitute.

THE CHAIRMAN: In what respect?

MR. HYNDMAN: Not capable. Here in June this year she could not make the trip on schedule.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you mean that she has not the steam-power?

MR. HYNDMAN: Well, in a sea we consider she is not seaworthy

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you had a report on her?

MR. HYNDMAN: Only the report from what is general public feeling, as well as those familiar with marine matters.

THE CHAIRMAN: You can say that the general public does not like going on it, but you cannot say that she is unseaworthy.

MR. HYNDMAN: I say that in stormy weather she could not cross. That should be sufficient evidence that she is not seaworthy, when in June she could not make the crossing and keep up her schedule.

THE CHAIRMAN: There are occasions when a storm is so great that the most seaworthy boat of its type would not venture out.

MR. HYNDMAN: I don't think there are storms like that here.

THE CHAIRMAN: You do not have those storms here? That may be. But you have to frame your statement in a way that carries its own conviction.

MR. HYNDMAN: If that boat were called on to substitute in winter, if anything happened the present car ferry, the "Scotia" would not have the power to negotiate the Straits.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does that mean that there were days when this boat was substituting and when you did not have any contact with the mainland at all?

MR HYNDMAN: There were several days, and if she did not miss she was very late in making the passage, and the passengers were held over until next morning.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you kept any record of that?

MR. HYNDMAN: I did not, no.

THE CHAIRMAN: Has anyone a record?

MR. HYNDMAN: The Railway would have a record. I had one right here, a clipping from a newspaper which says, "Storms delay crossing."

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you be quite satisfied that we accept the records of the railway company in all these matters?

MR. HYNDMAN: I think they would give you an accurate record.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am asking if you would accept their records on these matters?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes.

Continuing,Mr. Hyndman took up the winter train service and the tie-up on the lines after snowstorms. He said that last year, in the very first storm, the lines were blocked. We have not the equipment nor the roadbed to keep the line open.

THE CHAIRMAN: When you had the first snowstorm last year, were the train services suspended?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And how long did that last?

MR. HYNDMAN: It lasts sometimes two weeks at a time.

THE CHAIRMAN: But we are talking about last year. How long did that last?

MR. HYNDMAN: It might last two or three days.

THE CHAIRMAN: It might or it did, which is it?

MR. HYNDMAN: I would not be positive. I have not that information. We know the facts, that the line was tied up, for instance between Summerside and Tignish as long as fifteen days.

THE CHAIRMAN: You just want to be regarded as giving a general statement?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes. I have some statements here of the train service on certain lines.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you have any witnesses who can give us a few instances of that kind, it will illustrate the thing. I get no meaning at all out of a general statement that the first snow you had last winter the whole thing was tied up. I do not know what that means.

Continuing, Mr. Hyndman said that the effect of this winter service on general business was that as soon as the line is opened every commercial traveller in the Province gets out. No one will venture to Prince Edward Island when they hear of our lines being blocked . In 1923 the line to Summerside was tied up as long as three weeks at a time.

THE CHAIRMAN: It might be worth your while this winter to make a very exact note of these things. Ascertain at the time, so that there will be no questioning your record, exactly what the condition is.

Mr. Hyndman next pointed out that inadequate and inefficient transportation affects industrial activity and opportunities for employment. We are probably the only Province in Canada that is falling off in population. This he believed was largely attributable to railway difficulties. The freight rates have put local industries practically out of business, while Upper Canada has benefited, and this has discouraged our people from remaining at home. He pointed out that the Canadian Pacific Railway, to which this Province contributed as a partner of Canada, were not allowed to have running rights over the Government owned railway, and as a result Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (though they have the D. A. R. in Nova Scotia today) have been deprived of the Canadian Pacific services. Before the war the C. P. R. outlined the idea of bringing a car ferry from St. John to Digby, and one to Prince Edward Island. Mr. Hyndman had been in communication with them since, and President Beatty has promised to come to Prince Edward Island. It was tated that one of the difficulties to their coming here would be to get a charter from the Dominion Government, as duplication of service would be urged against it. So long as we keep the C. P. R. from coming here this Province will not get the service it is entitled to.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is it you are asking for, Mr. Hyndman? Are you asking that the Commission should not trouble itself about all these complaints in regard to the present system but should recommend that the C. P. R. be allowed to come here?

MR. HYNDMAN: That they should be allowed to come here if necessary.

COMMISSIONER WALLACE: Supposing it is impossible to get statistics that would precisely show the various classes and types of young men and people generally who leave the Island, can you state in a general way if it is farmers and the sons of farmers who leave?

MR. HYNDMAN: Yes sir. Here we have today—which we contend it unfair—harvest excursions advertised, calling for 50,000 harvesters for the West. That is attracting our young men away at a time when we want them most, when we are straightened for lack of help on the farm.

COMMISSIONER WALLACE: How are you going to prevent it?

MR. HYNDMAN: Perhaps we cannot. But I have letters from Maritime men who are out West and want to get excursion rates to the East, to come home, and they cannot get them. (Mr. Hyndman cited comparative rates and filed with the Commission some correspondence he had in this connection with Sir Henry Thornton and others.

Continuing, Mr. Hyndman stressed the need of assistance in attracting suitable settlers as well as tourists, to the Island. We are not able to get the publicity that the Central and Western Provinces receive through the Dominion Government. We are being discriminated against.

THE CHAIRMAN: The $5,000 requirement for settlers may prevent them coming here.

MR. HYNDMAN: I believe there is some assistance being given today, to the extent of £300, to people, to loocate in Canada.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are not talking about forcing people in this direction.

MR. HYNDMAN: They should be given the opportunity, that is all.

The argument often urged that the Island division of the railway is operated at a loss, and therefore that improved service is unjustified from a financial standpoint, Mr. Hyndman declared to be wrong. There is no deficit in operation outside of the car ferry, yet it is alway worked out to the prejudice of the Island. He also dealt briefly with the menace of the catalogue business which, he said, is undermining the mercantile life of the Maritimes.

THE CHAIRMAN: But they won't undermine your business if the Island people refuse to buy from them.

MR. HYNDMAN: We are trying to educate the people today to buy at home, but they have been getting that service and the habit is growing. These big organizations are getting special discounts from the manufacturer. They are working hand in glove together and are taking away the legitimate business from our retail merchants.

Concluding, Mr. Hyndman said that as part of the Maritime Provinces we are greatly concerned in the coal and steel industry, from a marketing point of view. We are therefore keenly interested in seeing something done for the protection and development of these industries to the fullest extent.

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ELLIOTVALE SCHOOL CLOSING.

The closing exercises of Elliotvale School took place in the school-room on the evening of June 30th., and were exceptionally well attended. The school was converted into a hall for the occassion and was decorated with purple and gold streamers and flags of Canada and the British Empire.

There were about fifty parents and visitors present and fifty school children.

The examination in the different subjects were carried out first by the teacher, Daniel A. MacCormac assisted by Mr. M.J. Kelly and Mrs. G. Franklin Worth now of Boston. After the examination a splendid programme consisting of dialogues, recitations, and drills, was carried out. Mr. M. J. Kelly acted as chairman. Home made candy and cake was served to the pupils and visitors at intervals during the programme, and was greatly enjoyed.

The year's work was reviewed by Mr. MacCormac. He spoke concerning the work accomplished in the different grades, the school-fair in which Elliotvale led; the Junior Red Cross which was established in the school during the year, Arbor Day programme; Physical drill work, etc. This was a new feature in the school. After the programme an address and beautiful presentation was made to the teacher. Miss Roselle McInnis read the address and Miss Helen Gill made the presentation.

Following is the prize list:

General Proficiency—Rosella McInnis.

Deportment—1. Wilfred Gormley 2. Helen Gill.

Attendance—Evelyn Gill.

Highest standing in 3rd Reader—Gordon Gill.

2nd Reader—Peter McInnis.

1st. Reader—Joseph Carmichael.

Primer, (a)—Evelyn Gill.

Primer, (b)—Emmet Power.

Prizes for Advancement—Teresa Cullen, John Carmichael.

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