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P. E. ISLAND MAILS.

Bad Service Between Sackville and Tormentine Shown up by Messrs Martin, McDonald and Others.

(Parliamentary Correspondence.)

OTTAWA, May 17.—Yesterday the attention of the House of Commons was once more called to the state of affairs in Prince Edward Island by Mr. Martin and his opposition colleague Mr. McDonald. The Island province has large claims growing out of local transportation questions and general financial relations to the Dominion. But the particular matter which Mr. Martin brought to the attention of the House was the mail service. At best when the only means of regular mail transportation is by ice boats between Cape Traverse and Cape Tormentine some delays are sure to occur. But the present trouble is over delays that have taken place on the mainland between Cape Tormentine and the Intercolonial. It appears that this delay is entirely unnecessary. There is a railway between these two points which is always open. As Mr. Powell explained at the end of the debate, several mail trains arrived at Sackville during the day and the regular traffic trains of the railway to Cape Tormentine cannot make close connections with them all. The through trains from and to Montreal and the west are the ones with which Mr. Mulock wishes to establish connections. Some of these trains are usually behind time and it is impossible to make a time table on the branch line which will connect with them and at the same time perform local service for which the railway is intended.

Senator Wood's company offered to provide a special train to meet the case. This train would always leave Sackville when the mails came there and leave Cape Tormentine when the mails arrived by the boat. Mr. Mulock refused to pay the price required, which Mr. Powell says is lower than is paid by Mr. Mulock for similar service to other roads in Canada. At the same time the Postmaster General protested against the failure to make connection with all the mail trains. Finally the opportunity was improved to make friends with the mammoth of unrighteousness and mix the affair up with New Brunswick provincial politics. Senator Wood does not support the Emerson Government and one of the friends of that Ministry, who was also a candidate for a seat in the House, wanted to take away the mail contract from the railway and obtain it for friends of his own. The result was a retrograde movement, as Mr. Martin calls it, and the transfer of the service to a stage. The distance is 38 miles, but this particular family interest required that it should be made still greater. Aulac Station is the nearest point on the Intercolonial but the contract was made that mails should be carried past this station four miles further to Sackville. The effect of this pleasing arrangement was that while the stage driver was moving along the line of the Intercolonial the train which he was trying to meet was speeding past him. The mails were accordingly piled up till the next day. Popular clamor and derision caused a change in these arrangements and the contract was transferred to others who made delivery at Aulac.

Such was the explanation given at the end of the debate by Mr. Powell. We may now return to Mr. Martin, who explained that under the contract by open stage mails were delivered anywhere from one to four days behind time, that they were kept between Aulac and Cape Tormentine from Monday until Thursday, that sometimes they were deposited along the road in barns and other shelters, and occasionally dropped on the highway, and on the whole, the service was as wretched as it possibly could be. It is natural that he should speak in rather strong language of a service like this which takes in the mails for a whole province, and especially that he should refer to Sir Louis Davies, who, a few years ago was posing as the chief defender of the interests of Prince Edward Island. The other day Mr. Mulock announced that the horse conveyance had proved so satisfactory, and that it was proposed to call for tenders to establish it permanently. For it may be remarked that the political contract made last winter was given without tender.

Mr. Martin read a number of letters from travellers and merchants speaking of this mail service, point out that it was decidedly unsatisfactory and that it had inflicted great injury on merchant whose bills of lading and other papers had been delayed, and that among other things it violated the principles of the S. P. C. A. inasmuch as the contractor's horses were, some of them, unfit to be on the road. Mr. Martin was willing that Mr. Mulock should busy himself with establishing penny postage all over the Empire at a considerable expense to Canada, but suggested that Prince Edward Island was a part of the Empire not entirely without importance and that the Minister ought in the midst of his great Imperial enterprises to give some thought to his own country. He would perhaps conclude that it was a mean business to try to save a few dollars by depriving the Province of a regular communication which could be established at comparatively small cost by special train.

If the Ministers would not do it Mr. Martin believed that the people of Prince Edward Island would rather pay for it themselves than go on as the Postmaster General proposed. It often happened that mails came from Vancouver to Halifax in less time than they from Halifax to Charlottetown, and one merchant was quoted as saying that the service made connections only six times during the winter. What was really needed was a special mail train with mail clerks who could assort the mails so that they could be delivered at Cape Tormentine for transmission eastward to Summerside. This would not cost more than was paid for much less important services elsewhere. Mr. Mulock

had offered no adequate defence for the degradation he had imposed on the service and the humiliation he had inflicted on the province.

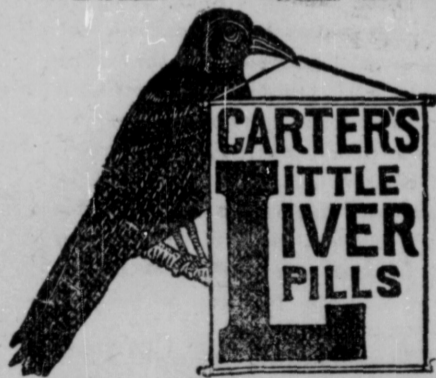
Mr. Bell and Mr. McLellan seemed to hesitate between their desire to support the Government and their wish for a better mail service. Both of them freely admitted that affairs were not satisfactory; but both said that as regards a portion of the mail bound to the Island from the mainland the stage service was better than the train service had been. They did not make such a claim in regard to the mails from the Island to the mainland nor those from the mainland to the western part of the Island. Both advocated the establishment of a special train service and mildly objected to the proposed course of Mr. Mulock to make permanent the system established last winter. Mr. Bell tried to get the Government down easy by saying that Sir Louis Davies deserved a great deal of credit for procuring a new boat to take the place of the "Stanley." He hoped that one of the two boats would be established on the western service and that a regular steambot service might be continued between Summerside and the mainland during the winter. This was apparently intended as a diversion from the subject under discussion.

Mr. McDonald got back to the point. It strikes him as being an altogether shameful thing that this alleged progressive Government should have gone back to sleighs and stages on a forty mile route, when a railroad was there prepared to do business on easy terms. Mr. McDonald is not so sanguine as Mr. Bell about the possibilities of steambot service over the western route. He stands by Georgetown and the East. But he will be glad to see improvements attempted. In the meantime he cannot see why the Government should not avail themselves of modern means of conveyance and give Prince Edward Island a special mail service as is done elsewhere when there is need of it.

Sir Louis insisted that the stage was all right, much better than the service of old times. He declared that connections had been well made, but would "candidly admit" that the Island was entitled to a special train service with mail clerks and all conveniences for handling the mail traffic expeditiously. This seems to be a candid admission on the part of the Minister of Marine that the Postmaster-General is too much for him! Sir Louis went on to commend himself for buying a new ship and to say that he was going to have a survey made of the route between the Capes and see whether a steamship service could be maintained. If that cannot be done it may be presumed, for all that Sir Louis said to the contrary, that some of Mr. Emerson's friends will continue to plod along through the snow with the Prince Edward Island mails, delivering them any time from one day to a week after they are due, and depositing them in the meantime at such convenient and inconvenient places as may be found.

Mr. Powell's statements, mentioned above, put a new light on the matter and remark of Sir Louis Davies gave them additional point. Sir Louis observed that the Cape Tormentine railway now performed a local service for the Postmaster-General and intimated that if the Company would not accept Mr. Mulock's terms for a special through service it would lose the other contract. Mr. Powell said that he understood all about this threat, and admitted that the Government probably had friends who would be glad to get this job also. But he assured Sir Louis that the owners of the railway were not likely to be intimidated by threats. As they had offered to perform the service at the ordinary rates they would wait to see what the Minister would do. If he carried out his threat the company could survive as it fortunately was not dependent upon anything that Sir Louis Davies could do in its behalf. The Government had succeeded in giving a most disgraceful mail service to Prince Edward Island, and in doing so had saved no money to the Post Office Department. On the contrary it would be found that the whole thing was bad economy, though for the purpose of the New Brunswick Provincial election it might have been smart politics.

S. D. S.



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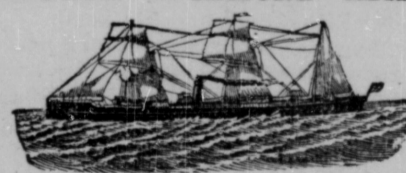
Spring

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You buy at least two suits and an overcoat yearly. You probably purchase three hats and three pairs of shoes in the same time.

Your tailor receives about ten times as much as your hatter, and seven times as much as your shoemaker. Yet both your hat and shoes are ready-made, and better made than they could be at almost twice the price, if produced singly—to order. Why should not your suit or overcoat be ready-made, and as well made at half to two-thirds the price as your hat or shoe?

Less than ten years ago there was not a hat factory in Canada, and the shoe factories were producing only brogans and clumsy sewed or pegged shoes.

But they have long since improved the "custom" shoemaker and hatter out of existence. Clothing alone stood still at the "brogan" standard. It was different in the United States, where ready-made clothing kept pace with the ready made hat and shoe. It is different here since the advent of Fit-Reform and the quicker you find out that difference the sooner will you get your shoes and hats every year for nothing. You can do this by saving one-third the price of the tailored suit, in buying the self-same garments "ready-made" here. And you will find just as good people here buying our kind of ready-made clothes as you ever saw in the highest priced tailor shop.

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