

C. N. R. Bus

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ently moving by railway. However, should our proposed highway operations result in bus operators on the same routes withdrawing their services, the Railway will undertake to protect the requirements of service on these routes by providing the bus services deemed necessary in the public interest by the Public Utilities Commission.

"It is understood, of course, that should the railway be granted the highway licenses sought, it will then be necessary to obtain approval of the Board of Transport Commissioners to the substitution of highway for rail services. This action will be undertaken by the Railway if and when approval of our application to your Government is obtained."

The Railway letter, which is signed by Mr. W. E. Robinson, vice president and general manager, Atlantic Region, C. N. R. and dated Feb. 1, 1952, recalls that in 1950 the Railway completed its program of dieselization and Prince Edward Island thus became the first Province in Canada to have its entire railway mileage operated by modern diesel locomotives. Further, in the fall of 1951 the Railway instituted a trucking service in the Province in an effort to speed up deliveries of express, mail and less-than-carload freight.

Recent Board Decision

The letter also recalls that some two years ago the Railway presented for approval a plan to completely modernize passenger transport facilities by substituting bus services for the present mixed train services. The present letter on the same subject was prompted by the recent decision of the Board of Transport Commissioners in connection with the Charlottetown-Murray Harbour train service.

The bus licenses sought are for the following areas: Elmira-Souris-Charlottetown; Murray Harbour-Charlottetown (May 1 to Dec. 1); Georgetown-Charlottetown; Charlottetown-Borden-Summerside; Charlottetown-Summerside-Tignish.

"It is our desire," the letter states, "to replace all passenger services on the Island with bus services, except trains Nos. 39 and 40 between Charlottetown and Borden. By doing so we would be enabled to provide the people of Prince Edward Island with passenger services by highway eminently superior to those now possible by rail. Morning connections to the mainland would be provided from all points available in the evening."

"In this way passengers from the ends of the Island, such as Elmira, Souris, Georgetown, Mon-

tagne, Murray Harbour and Tignish, as well as those at intermediate points, would be able to travel to and from the mainland without necessity of spending the night at either Charlottetown or Summerside. All this should mean a substantial saving in time and money to residents of these areas. All of the bus schedules would be considerably shorter than existing rail schedules, as a glance at the memorandum attached will indicate."

In conclusion the letter emphasizes that "in submitting this proposal the Railway is activated by a desire to further improve transportation facilities on Prince Edward Island, and to offer the best possible service consistent with the traffic to be handled."

PREMIER'S REPLY

In his reply, dated Feb. 26 last, Premier Jones states:

"Dear Mr. Robinson: "I have delayed acknowledging your letter of February 1st until I had an opportunity to discuss the important question raised in it with my colleagues in the Government."

"At first I thought I would, with your permission, publish the letter, and if you so wish it, it will be done. Then I thought I might give the question the consideration it demands by appointing a Select Standing Committee on Transportation in our provincial assembly which would hold hearings and take evidence. Our opinion is that a majority of the people might accept the plan you propose, but the Boards of Trade, the Farmers' Federation, the truckers, the bus operators, and other organized bodies might fear a monopoly of transport."

"The Federation of Agriculture would likely wonder why the railway would seek to do something to help transport on Prince Edward Island when it recently appealed a decision to establish one zone of freight rates, after it had been recommended by the Royal Commission on Freight Rates and ordered by the Board of Transport Commissioners. They, as well as many of our citizens, cannot, on the record, believe in your professed worthy intentions. That is a handicap you labour under in making these proposals."

"Another handicap is the general belief here that the railway is an inefficient organization, controlled by organized labour and is practically a political organization. The men who get jobs on the C.N.R.—which is a Crown company—are, in practice, political appointees, they work an eight-hour day and they have been known to strike and paralyze all the transport they could control. In fact, they stopped the operation of the car ferry, a wholly illegal act, during the recent strike and apparently without a protest from the railway and the Government of Canada which drafted the agreement which was violated."

"If the railway obtained bus transportation in addition to the L.C.L. freight trucking now in operation, it would have nearly complete control of transport and only the Wood Islands Ferry would be independent. It is likely the control here by our Board of Public Utilities would be weak in comparison with the control of the Board of Transport Commissioners or whatever body will succeed them in the transport field. "I presume, too, your trucks and buses eventually would not use gasoline and hence give us little or no revenue for our road upkeep. How long would it be until the railway would want to truck all freight to Borden, and pull out all tracks except possibly the line from Charlottetown to Summerside and to Borden?" "I would like to have your views on a steamship service for eight months of the year. Also, your views on how to reach Sydney by truck using a route shorter than going by way of Borden. It is evident the government will take no immediate action. They will require that the proposition be developed so that every citizen will understand what he is getting into, before they risk their political existence on such a drastic change in our methods of transport. You will understand that whatever eventuates, the Government, and not the railway, will be held responsible. The Railway is a Federal Crown corporation and not subject to provincial controls to any great extent. The people of Prince Edward Island would hold their Government responsible for sacrificing their transport autonomy. "Possibly a more practical method would be for the Province to do its own transportation, if a suitable allowance were paid for roads as compensation for the freight collected at Borden. At

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