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**THE DAILY EXAMINER**

AUGUST 9, 1895.

**"THE CONSERVATIVES DID IT."**

We find in Hansard for August 2nd, just to hand, very striking proof of the truth of a recent contention of THE EXAMINER. The value of this proof, will, we have no doubt, be recognized by both the Patriot and The Guardian. It was given upon the occasion of the passage of the vote of \$250,000 towards the construction of the Belfast and Murray Harbor railway, including the bridge over the Hillsborough. After questions on the part of Mr. Sproule and Mr. Wallace, and answers and explanations, pro and con, by the Minister of Railways and Mr. Martin, a question as to whether the Dominion of the province had paid for the Prince Edward Island railway in the first place was raised by Mr. McMullen. Mr. Bell—our own Mr. Bell—assayed to answer this question, and having done so as well as he could, he added:

"Before I conclude, I want to point out that the late Conservative Government, some three years ago, introduced resolutions into this House looking towards the construction of certain branch railways in Prince Edward Island; and the amount of money that was to be expended in their construction was largely in excess of the amount now proposed to be expended; so that our hon. friends of the Conservative party have no cause to complain if we are following in a slight degree the precedents which they themselves established.

Following Mr. Bell came Mr. McMullen well known as a leading Liberal, who assailed the Conservative Government for building and proposing so many branch railways, and said:—

"We are given to understand that Sir Charles Tupper, when he went to Prince Edward Island previous to the last election, in order to carry the province, promised that if he were returned as Premier he would build not only this line, but no less than seven lines in Prince Edward Island. The result is, I presume, that the present Government are compelled to take into consideration some of these claims, if they are to have any foothold at all."

Mr. McMullen forgetting for the nonce the immense expenditure of last year and this year—went on to denounce the policy of the Conservative Government and the branch railways and to argue that the present administration was putting a stop to it. He said:—

They have however made wonderful progress in that direction, for they are only building one line, whereas if we had the hon. leader of the Opposition in power we would be building a number of lines.

According to Messrs Bell and McMullen the Government of Sir Charles Tupper was to be blamed for committing the country to the construction of the lines of branch railway proposed for this province; while the present Government is deserving of credit for proposing to build only the Belfast and Murray Harbor branch,—thus making "wonderful progress" as Mr. McMullen claimed.

We ask the people of Prince Edward Island to mark well these words of Messrs. Bell and McMullen, and to distribute their praise or their blame for the construction of the Belfast and Murray Harbor railway to the party indicated by them. They say in effect that "the Conservatives did it."

Mr. Martin came to the support of Prince Edward Island in a manner that was truly admirable, setting forth very clearly that every dollar of the original cost of its railway was charged against the Province at the time of Confederation; that millions upon millions in excess of the amount estimated at that time had since then been expended upon railway and canal construction in other parts of Canada, and only a few thousands in this Pro-

vince; and proving up to the hilt that this province was equitably entitled not only to the Belfast and Murray Harbor branches, but to the other shorter branches proposed by the Conservative Government as well. Mr. Macdonald also took part in the discussion, and did not forget to again direct attention to the excessive railway rates charged here. But we have to-day only space for the remarks of Messrs. Haggart and Foster, as reported in Hansard:

"Mr. Haggart. I desire to say only a few words in support of the contention of my hon. friend from Prince Edward Island (Mr. Martin). His statement is literally correct. On entering confederation, Prince Edward Island was charged \$3,144,000 for the road partly constructed and partly to be constructed. They were entitled, in other words, to \$3,144,000 in cash. They said to the Government: You take this undertaking off our hands and charge us with the amount. And so the Government assumed the road. If the road was a paying concern, the people of Prince Edward Island were entitled to the interest which they were allowed, or \$150,000 a year. But it was not a paying concern; we lost on it at the rate of \$70,000 a year. I think that is a fair charge to be made against the interest which they would be entitled to. We came to the conclusion that they were entitled under the confederation arrangements to \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year. And so I brought down some resolutions to the House to grant subsidies to different lines of railways in Prince Edward Island—

The Minister of Finance—That is, the votes to build them?

Mr. Haggart. Yes, not to subsidize them in the ordinary sense. One was the very road now under discussion. I think the Government are perfectly justified in proposing it. This road is a road which the people of Prince Edward Island have set their hearts upon. They are entitled to some consideration from the Government in the shape of a subsidy or balance to make up to a confederation. I think it would have been better if the Government had followed the resolutions which I introduced into the House and undertaken the whole of these roads at once. If I remember rightly, these lines included one from the main line to Stanley Bridge, another from the main line to Rustico, another from North Wiltshire to Crapaud, two little lines in the direction of Richmond Bay, and one from Charlottetown—besides the one now under discussion.

The Minister of Railways and Canals. What was the mileage altogether?

Mr. Haggart. According to my recollection, it was about 105 miles. Though I have often been charged with heresy and often laughed at for it, I am of the same opinion as the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), that when for Dominion purposes, large expenditures were made in one part of the country, it is sound public policy, and it is just, that expenditure to counterbalance these should be made in other parts which are not benefited by the first expenditures. In spite of all the charges of heresy I have never got that out of my head yet. Prince Edward Island has received nothing in the shape of subsidies to railways at any time. It is entitled to its share; and if the people have set their hearts on these little lines of railway, they should have them. The charge to the country would not amount to over \$25,000, or \$30,000 a year. Even if it amounted to \$70,000, and the deficit on the Prince Edward Island Railway was only \$70,000 it would be only fair-play and just to Prince Edward Island under the terms of confederation.

Those were the principal grounds on which I introduced the resolution. I was aware that instead of receiving a substantial revenue from it the probabilities were that there would be a deficit. I calculated on this deficit, and on those grounds I introduced the resolution. The hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) finds fault with the resolution which I introduced. He says it is compulsory on the Government now to introduce resolutions in this particular direction because we promised so much, and they had to perform part of it. The hon. gentleman is prepared to swallow his words in detail; he will swallow a resolution for this part of the railway, and next year, I suppose, if the Minister of railways and Canals brings down another resolution; he will swallow that. He finds fault with the manner in which I kept the accounts for the Intercolonial Railway. He said that on the different sections

of the Intercolonial Railway, the Oxford and New Glasgow branch, the Cape Breton branch and others, I purposely added the whole of the receipts and expenditures into one account for the purpose of confusing the country. I did not do what the Minister whom he is supporting does—confuse them by adding the Drummond and Montreal section of the Intercolonial Railway, notwithstanding the promise of his colleague in another branch of Parliament and the promise given to the country in this House that we would have a detailed account of the receipts and expenditures from that road. I only mention these things for the purpose of replying to the member for North Wellington, and for the purpose of supporting this undertaking, which the members from Prince Edward Island have so much at heart.

Mr. Foster—Has the route been decided upon between Charlottetown and Murray Harbor?

The Minister of Railways and Canals—Yes. We are going in as direct a course as possible. Surveys have been made, but I think they will require to be gone over again. But substantially we are pursuing as direct a course as possible from Charlottetown, crossing the Hillsboro River direct to Murray Harbor. The line is 44 miles long.

Mr. Foster—Does the provincial legislature grant anything towards this line?

The Minister of Railways and Canals—Yes. The hon. gentleman will find in "Hansard" what I have said on this subject. They engage to pay one-half the estimated cost of the bridge. \$400,000 would be one-half the cost of the bridge and they engage to pay 3 per cent interest upon that amount, or \$12,000, in consideration of our making not only a railway bridge but a highway for foot-passengers over the bridge. They pay that for all time.

Mr. Foster—The ex-Minister of Railways and Canals has brought to the attention of the House the resolutions which were introduced in 1890 by the Government of that day. I remember going very carefully into the matter with my hon. friend and another member of the Government as a committee. We did not go into it in connection with this one particular part of the island, but we went into it with reference to the different parts of the island, with an idea of proposing and carrying out such branch roads as, when fully completed would connect every portion of the island which it seemed to us had need of communication with the mainland, and out of which we believed that a fair traffic could be got. I know we went very carefully into the questions of costs and returns with the officers of the Railway Department. My hon. friend says that he faced a deficit as a result. I think from memory, that the deficit he faced was very small when it was put over a number of years. We thought it was small in view of a probable fair accretion of traffic, and we came to the conclusion that if these were once built every section of the island that could call for connection with the mainland would be satisfied, and that in the end the deficit would not be greater than at the present time, if indeed it was not made less. It is true that Prince Edward Island is a maritime province. It is indented everywhere with small bays; and it is true as well that the railway did a larger part of the traffic of Prince Edward Island in those days than can be done by water, and this is part, I think, of the economical policy. With reference to this line, considering its deficit and its cost in the past I think it is part of an economical policy that these branch lines should be built—not profusely, but where there is a possibility for a return from the traffic, and that they should at once be made feeders to the main line and concentrate the traffic into the main line.

Then I think by a fair and economical management, not only will you satisfy the needs of the island, but I believe you will put the whole traffic of the island with reference to the Intercolonial railway and its branches, in such a position that the deficit will not be any greater, if it is not, indeed, much less, than it is at the present time. That is my recollection of the result that we came to as a consequence of a pretty thorough study of the subject in connection with the Department of Railways. We brought those resolutions down to the House, and if we had remained in power we would have carried them through, and not only Murray Harbor, but the other sections of the Island which demanded them, as they do now, these advantages, would have had these lines of communication. On that basis I cannot do anything else but support this vote, which is only a part of our scheme, and I am only sorry the Minister has not carried out the plans outlined by the department under the management of my hon. friend, and completed this system by a network of small lines which would have called in to the main line the traffic from the outlying portions. So I am in favour of this vote, not only because I believe it is right, but because it was part of our own policy when we were in power, a part only and not the whole of it. The hon. member for North Wellington made a most unfortunate slip from the view of political morals when he brought himself down to the sticking point. Although he himself is opposed to this vote brought in by the Minister of Railways and Canals, still he thinks the Minister should bring it in because if he did not, the other party would get ahead of him. Now, that is the baldest kind of political corruption with regard to subsidies.

There is no trace of the apologetic tone of members and supporters of the government in the remarks of Messrs Haggart and Foster. Grants for the construction of the Belfast and Murray Harbor railway and the other branch railways which the Conservatives proposed to build in this Province are justified in a manly and statesmanlike way upon the good grounds of justice and business by leading members of the Conservative party. Looking at all the facts and circumstances, there can be no doubt, as Messrs. Bell and McMullen imply, that "the Conservatives did it."

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