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The Matter up to Date Clearly Explained by Senator Ferguson.

In his speech upon the Be'fast and Murray Harbor Railway B.L. Senator Ferguson first showed that P. E. Island, isolated from the rest of Canada, at first refused to enter the Confederation on account of the heavy expenditures proposed to be made upon railways and canals. Sir John Macdonald finally sealed that question by agreeing to terms of union in which it was clearly and frankly admitted that Prince Edward Island should be indemnified for her share of these great public expenditures. Senator Ferguson continued:

You will find, by referring to the statutes of 1873, both of the Dominion and of the province, that it was there declared that an allowance should be made to the province of Prince Edward Island on account, not merely of the debt of Canada as it stood then, but on account of the sums that the Parliament of Canada had authorized for the construction of these great public works, and if hon. gentlemen will take the pains to verify the figures they will find that the sum of \$45 per head, which was the amount allowed to Prince Edward Island on entering the union, was made up on the debt of Canada as it stood on the first of July, 1873, and the authorized expenditure by Canada on public works added. Hon. gentlemen will find, on making the calculation that it comes out exactly right. Adding the amount that was authorized for the expenditure on these three great public works of Canada to the debt as it stood in July, 1873, amounted to \$45 per head of the population. An additional \$5.00 was given on other grounds. That was all right and appeared to be perfectly equitable, but as years went on Canada undertook the construction of other great works in addition to those then provided for in the terms of union, and in place of expending \$30,000,000 on the Canadian Pacific Railway, \$62,000,000 was expended; in place of \$20,000,000 on the Intercolonial Railway, \$50,000,000 was expended; instead of \$9,000,000 on the canals, \$48,000,000 was expended, and these are all expenditures which, the terms of union clearly and distinctly set forth, Prince Edward Island, isolated as it was, could have no interest in and was indemnified for as far as the amount then authorized by Parliament. But in addition to this Parliament largely subsidized railways, a policy originating in 1882 and still continued. The government of Prince Edward Island in 1886 laid this whole matter before the government of Canada. The provincial government in 1898 submitted a memorandum which was very carefully prepared. I have gone over the figures and, having traversed the same ground several times, I find they are substantially correct. After making all allowances and making exact calculations, there would be due on the 1st of July, 1897, on a fair and square account, to Prince Edward Island \$2,174,705 53. That is in order to put Prince Edward Island in the same position as the other provinces of Canada, with regard to railway and canal expenditures of over \$2,000,000 in Prince Edward Island and this way up to the first of July, 1897. From that time up to the present, I have some figures here taken from the estimates, and this is what has happened: in this period, covering three years, including the year for which Parliament has just voted a set of estimates, I find there has been, either voted or submitted in the estimates in the present year, or paid, \$30,809,381 for railways and canals in Canada. And of that amount I think there has been some \$30,000 spent in the province of Prince Edward Island. This \$31,000,000 is in addition to the statement, altogether apart from and beyond what was included in the memo. of the provincial government two years ago. At the end of this financial year, if the government use the money they are now asking Parliament to vote, there will be a new expenditure of nearly \$31,000,000 on railways and canals embraced in the years 1898, 1899 and 1900. Prince Edward Island is one-fortieth part of Canada, and hon. gentlemen will see there is over \$760,000 which would be Prince Edward Island's share of that expenditure supposing it were distributed round all the provinces evenly. So, in addition to the \$2,174,000 which the province claims, and I think claims correctly, to be due to the Island in 1897, there has been an addition created by the extraordinary expenditures by the government since 1897 amounting to \$760,000. In the vote which is now submitted to Parliament \$250,000 is proposed to be expended in this year in the province of Prince Edward Island on this branch railway. I may say, further, what hon. gentlemen have a right to know, that the whole proposition embraces a very much larger expenditure than that. This railway, if it goes to Murray Harbor—I see most statements mention the head of Murray River but it would have to go nine miles further—would cost about \$1,319,000. Then the provincial government have provided a payment of \$12,000 annually towards this object.

Hon. Mr. Power—Does the sum of \$1,319,000, which the hon. gentleman mentions, include the cost of the bridge?

Hon. Mr. Ferguson—Yes this is a statement of the whole expenditure; the bridge, \$800,000; railway to Murray River, \$447,000; wharf and ground at Murray River, \$22,800; extension of Beach Point, and wharf there, \$94,000. I deduct from that, however, the \$22,800 for the wharf at Murray River and also \$23,040 because there is a shorter road surveyed than the one embraced in these estimates, which would cost that much less. That leaves

the net amount of the road and bridge \$1,319,205.

Hon. Sir MacKenzie Bowell—Will they take the shorter route.

Hon. Mr. Ferguson—Probably they will. The value of the \$12,000 a year which is required to be paid by the provincial govt. at the rate at which the govt. of Canada can borrow money, 2 7/8 per cent is \$417,391. Deducting that, the expense will be \$901,814. That is what it is proposed the whole of this work will cost the government of Canada. With regard to the bridge it is proposed—and this is a matter as to which a friendly arrangement is going on between the two governments—that the bridge shall be a railway and traffic bridge, and it is provided that the Provincial Government shall contribute \$12,000 a year in perpetuity, and the bill before us provides that that \$12,000 shall be deducted from the subsidy due the province half-yearly for all time to come. So that the door is locked very firmly and strongly in that direction. I think that is demanding a little too much, and that there will be some little difficulty, owing to the bill which the Provincial legislature passed last session, only providing for a sum not exceeding \$12,000, on a sum which would cover the fair proportion of the cost, for a traffic bridge. That is that engineers and experts should ascertain what proportion of the expense of the structure was due to the traffic part and what was due to the railway part, the provincial government assuming control of the traffic part and receive the tolls and the federal government receiving the earnings of the railway part. The proposition is all right, I think, but I am afraid there will be difficulty about coming to a bargain, because I think it is quite possible that a fair estimate would establish the fact that the traffic part of the bridge would be a great deal less expensive than the railway part, and that a fair division of the cost between the two would not be \$12,000 a year for the provincial government, but a sum considerably less than that.

However I presume it is a matter that we cannot deal with here, and that it has received all the consideration possible for it to receive at the present time. I find no fault that the provincial government should be called upon to contribute to the bridge as far as the traffic part of the bridge is concerned, but I hold that with the state of the account between the Province of Prince Edward Island and the Federal Government with regard to railways and railway expenditures generally, the provincial government should not be called upon to contribute anything towards the railway portion of the bridge, inasmuch as the bridge becomes a link in the Prince Edward Island system of railways. I may say—and I think my hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition, who has, I know, taken a great deal of interest in this question will bear me out—that the late government took this matter up and gave it a great deal of earnest consideration. All the subjects to which I have referred were discussed between the members of the late Government and the representatives from the province of Prince Edward Island in the years '85 and 1896, and it was decided by the late government at that time in the public interest, as well as in justice to the province of Prince Edward Island, that a number of small branches were to be built in the province, altogether some six or seven, and this was to be one of them, and the railway expenses were of the opinion that if these branches leading to the seaboard were built, tapping important settlements, and connecting with the fishing establishments on the coast, the result would have been to largely increase the earning power of the Prince Edward Island Railway. Mr. Schreiber made a report at that time, and it was his opinion that if that were done a very considerable amount would be contributed in the way of increased earnings for expenses on the railway in place of the deficit we have at the present time. I have no doubt that in a measure that opinion was correct. I have just barely stated the grounds of the contention between the province and the Dominion, and I must express my satisfaction to find that now we have the present government following, at a respectable distance, in the wake of the late administration accepting at least in part, the policy that was there laid down, and admitting the just claim of Prince Edward Island, in regard to this matter. I only hope they will not stop here, but that they will go on and fulfil the entire proposition and give us some other small branches that were suggested. This one is larger and more expensive than all the rest put together, very much more so even without considering the bridge when that is done I have no doubt that the account of the Prince Edward Island railway will show a very much better result than it has shown in the past. My hon. friend, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, who represents in the House of Commons some of the territory affected by this proposition, some years ago made a speech and advocated the scheme of a railway running across the country from Peake's station, in King's county, to connect the harbor of Wood Island with the railway instead of running from Southport to Murray Harbor and serving the country in the way in which it is proposed to do in the bill; and it might not be amiss for me to read the exact words used by the hon. gentleman at that time. He said:—

When I brought this question before the House in 1890, I thought it was desirable to put this matter before the government in a businesslike way. I had some consultation with a number of engineers, and I was assured by them that a branch line from Peake's station might be built which would give the necessary accommodation and do away with the necessity of a bridge across the Hillsboro' which will cost a half million of dollars.

That was the view of the hon. gentleman at that time. I happen to know that his opinions on that subject were severely criticized in the province of Prince Edward

Island, and that he was obliged to abandon that view later and take the popular opinion, the prevalent opinion in the province, which was that the road should be built on the line indicated in the present bill from Southport to Murray Harbor and the question of the bridge should also be entertained in connection with it. In reply to the memorial of the provincial government, to which I have just referred, and which I think was supported later by a delegation consisting of members of that government, the premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier wrote a letter to the premier of the province which has been brought down to Parliament during the present session. Sir Wilfrid Laurier made use of these words:—

I understand Sir Louis Davies had a good deal of correspondence with you and your predecessors on this point, and that the government of the province has passed an Order in Council, agreeing to contribute \$10,000 annually as its share towards the cost of the bridge in case the Parliament of Canada should authorize its construction, while it is contended that your fair share should certainly not be less than \$12,000 annually. I do not presume at present to discuss these details, but I desire to point out to you that the claim you have made in the memorial for a readjustment of your financial terms of union on the ground of alleged underestimate of expenditure upon the Intercolonial Railway, Canadian Pacific Railway, canals, &c., would even from your standpoint present an altogether different aspect if the Dominion was to undertake the construction of this railway and bridge?

I have just to say—and I wish to make that statement distinctly on the present occasion, as representing the province of (Continued on page 4.)

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