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Mr. Shaw Discusses The Potato Situation

There has been a great deal of discussion within the past week or so on price support for potatoes...

"One of the latest has reference to a subsidy on starch production. The absorption of potatoes for starch on Prince Edward Island would not be great, but in the Province of New Brunswick starch factories could siphon off very large quantities. Irrespective of where the potatoes are taken from the whole situation on the open market would be materially improved by the diversion of supplies for starch purposes.

"As far as other forms of assistance are concerned I doubt if there will be very much of a change of mind in higher circles regarding the Support Policy. Some suggestion has been advanced that potatoes for feeding purposes might be subsidized, and in view of the needs of the country for larger meat supplies, there might be some merit in a proposal of this kind. In any event we are giving all these matters careful consideration and are keeping our fingers crossed regarding the final outcome.

Appeals For Cooperation

"May I say again that it is a year of extreme difficulty in marketing and one in which any selfish interests on the part of any elements in the trade should be cracked down with vigor. Critics of Marketing Boards that are trying to do a good job and of dealers who are trying to do a good job, should not be kicked around before the public gaze, but the fullest and most sincere cooperation of all should be enlisted for the purpose of strengthening facilities for marketing all along the line.

"If there is too much of the attitude prevalent that there is a big fight on, as long as that attitude prevails our marketing system will remain weak. Thoughtless criticism and thoughtless action by thoughtless men will never do any industry any good. At the same time I have seen evidence this year of real sincere effort.

"There is a healthy attitude developing toward improved packaging and quality of potatoes and one of our foremost dealers is now laying down plans to use the hydrometer for starch content and put up potatoes of a kind and quality that will develop consumer recognition. In this connection considerations in the State of Maine are pointing to the elimination of unfavourable varieties and to the production of varieties of high eating merit.

"I am personally of the opinion that if Prince Edward Island potato growers produce (and they can do so) potatoes that are a little better than those of our competitors and jack up on our inspection and packaging that we will very rarely have a marketing problem or a poor price in any normal year. Producers and Marketing Boards and dealers can do a job of this kind if they want to do it.

"Some concern has been expressed recently regarding the high price of jute and potato sacks have gone up. This has directed the attention of our shippers to second hand bags. I would like to point out the very grave danger of using these sacks. All round about us there are potato diseases which, if they gain a foothold in this Province, will put us out of the potato business.

Second Hand Bags

"The use of second hand bags coming in from outside areas may carry these diseases. Producers and dealers be careful. If any other form of sack, is available do not use second hand bags. If it is necessary to use second hand bags then they must be properly disinfected. I have seen some of the so-called disinfection processes on these bags in other provinces and these processes will not meet our

standards or requirements. Our inspectors are instructed (and they know what they are doing) to enforce the regulations. Following is the regulation under the Ring Rot and Plant Diseases Act:

"No grower or dealer shall use crates, bags or other containers for the handling of potatoes that have been previously used unless the same have been disinfected to the satisfaction of the Inspector."

"No second hand bags previously used outside the Province of Prince Edward Island shall be used in this Province for potatoes unless said bags have been properly disinfected."

"Every carrier shall furnish the Minister, on request, with full information as to the transportation of second hand bags into the Province of Prince Edward Island including the number or quantity and the names of the Consignors and Consignees thereof."

Recommends Changes (Continued from Page 1)

at bringing it out of its chronic deficit position. The plan also called for the Government reimbursing the C. N. R. for losses on Newfoundland operations—an estimated \$4,000,000 a year—and for allowing the company to retain part of any earned surpluses, now turned in to the treasury.

2. A recommendation for applying limitations in general freight-rate increases on long-haul traffic, which would benefit shippers and receivers of freight in the Maritimes and the west.

3. Rejection of proposals for any kind of amalgamation, unification or public ownership of the railways. The Prince Edward Island Government had been the chief advocate of this type of action in the Commission's hearings.

4. Rejection, for the time being at least, of a Canadian Pacific Railway proposal that Parliament free the statutory "Crow's Nest Pass" rates to enable them to become subject to the same control as other rates. The Commission devoted a major chapter to this controversial issue, which provided one of the hottest fights of the inquiry.

5. Rejection also of a Maritime request for federal construction of an 18-mile canal across the isthmus of Chignecto to link the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of Fundy and give an all-inland waterway down the Atlantic coast. The Commission estimated the project would cost \$100,000,000.

6. Rejection of a C. P. R. proposal that the system of setting rail rates be changed by statute to have tolls based so as to yield a specified "rate of return" on the investment value of that company. The C. P. R. now is the rate-making "yardstick," but the rates are set on its periodic financial requirements as determined by the Board of Transport Commissioners.

(While concurring with the other two Commissioners in this rejection, Commissioner Angus expressed himself in favor of the principle of the rate-base method and said the board might find its use convenient. However, he did not think it should be imposed on the board by statute until some of the "highly controversial issues" surrounding it had first been removed.)

7. Rejection of all requests for government subsidies on rail transport, including a Saskatchewan proposal for a prairie subsidy estimated at about \$40,000,000-a-year, northern Ontario's subsidy had not been included in submissions presented to the Commission.)

8. Rejection of a British Columbia Government plan for a new rate-making principle based more closely on actual cost of hauling various commodities than on the present "value of service" method, sometimes called the principle of

"what the traffic will bear."

9. Recommendation for a uniform system of accounting for the two big railways, with the Board of Transport Commissioners setting up the type of depreciation and other practices to be followed.

10. A recommendation for closer Parliamentary security of whether the C. N. R. and C. P. R. affect joint co-operative economies under a 1933 statute ordering them to save money through pooling of services and the like. Some Provincial Governments argued during the hearings that greater co-operative economies would cut down the size of freight-rate increases.

Eight Provincial governments took part in the Commission's hearings, which stretched through 138 daily sessions in 1949 and 1950. It was at the instance of seven of them—the Maritimes and the West that the Commission was originally appointed in 1948 following complaints at the way the first post-war rate-increase case had been handled.

Newfoundland joined the other Provinces after it entered Confederation in 1949. Its submissions were largely confined to seeking improvement of transport facilities in the new Province, but the other Governments entered a wide range of recommendations dealing mainly with rail rates and Allied matters.

The Ontario and Quebec Governments took no part in the investigation. The Commission observed in its report that these Provinces are in a relatively advantageous position with respect to transportation charges, since competition between rail, highway and water facilities tends to hold down their rates.

The Western Provinces were mainly responsible for pushing the rate-equalization proposal, though the plan as finally drafted was that of the Commission and its experts. The proposal for co-ordination of transport facilities had been put forward in some degree by witnesses before the Commission, which eventually carried it somewhat further and in a different direction than had been proposed.

Some railway witnesses called for co-ordination or a measure of "centralized control" over transport mainly to put checks on the increasing commercial highway competition cutting into high-grade rail traffic.

In its findings, the Commission took note of the competition factor but made no recommendation that would encroach on the Provinces' defined jurisdiction over intra-provincial highway traffic.

There is no hope, it said, that central uniform control of all transport, including provincial, can be realized in the near future. It added the hope, though, that some day the Provinces will agree to co-operate with the Federal authority in carrying out a "common policy of co-ordination."

Meanwhile, it added, there is no reason why Parliament should not proceed as far as its authority extends towards establishing a national transportation system under the control and regulation of a supervisory board.

It listed the various transport agencies—with the word "highways" in brackets—and said they should be regulated so as to serve in meeting the country's needs.

Adoption of the policy of co-ordinated control, it declared, would bring together the three federal boards "reorganized and united and devoted to the pursuit of a well-planned policy for the co-ordination and regulation of all transport."

The commission did not set forth any specific principles to be followed in the co-ordination process.

Nor did it give any recommend-

ations as to the make-up of the over-all board, except that in another section of the report it suggested that the Board of Transport Commissioners—whose set-up probably would form the basis of the new body—should continue to be headed by a judge of the Exchequer Court of Canada. It also said tenure should be changed from 10-year terms to permanent appointments with retirement at 75.

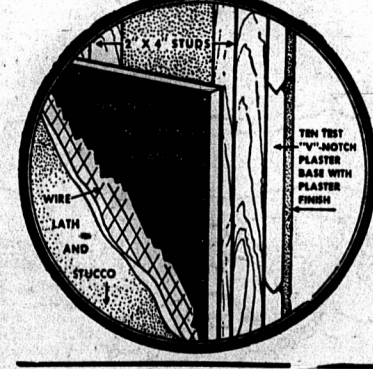
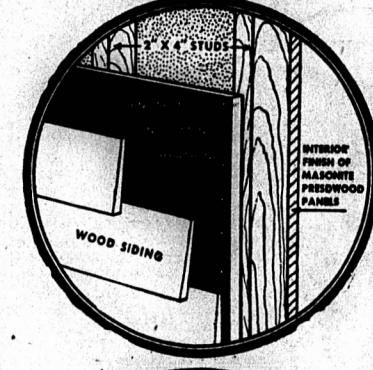
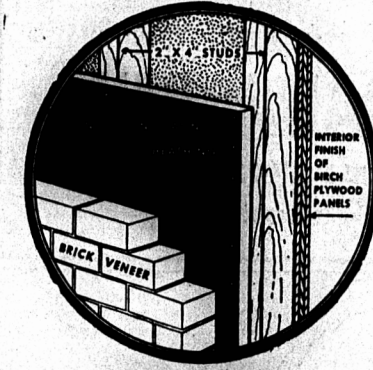
Chief Commissioner of the six-man board is Mr. Justice M. B. Archibald. J. C. Lessard, Deputy Minister of Transport, has headed the Maritime Commission since its full-time chairman resigned last year. The Air Transport Board is under John Baldwin.

The Board of Transport Commissioners now is engaged in a general inquiry into the freight-rate structure with a view to arriving at an equalization scheme of its own. The cabinet ordered this study in 1948 and subsequently sent the Royal Commission on an inquiry that overlapped in this regard.

The Royal Commission said, that question really was one for the Transport Board to deal with, and

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