

CURTAILMENT OF SERVICE

ON N. B. BRANCH RAILWAYS

DISCUSSED IN PARLIAMENT

R. B. Hanson is of Opinion That New Found Zeal For Economy is Being Carried Too Far—Hon. B. F. Smith Deals With Cut in Valley Railway Service.

A bill before Parliament last week, providing for an increase in the number of directors of the Canadian National Railways, was seized upon by New Brunswick members to complain of the curtailment of branch line train service in this province. Hon. Mr. Veniot protested against the withdrawal of trains on the Caraquet and Gulf shore railway and expressed the opinion that there had been discrimination against his country. Hon. B. Frank Smith, of Carleton-Victoria, and R. B. Hanson, of York-Sunbury, also, spoke and Hansard reports them as follows:—

Hon. B. F. Smith

MR. SMITH (Victoria-Carleton): Mr. Chairman, while I do not agree with some of the remarks of the ex-Postmaster General (Mr. Veniot) I must confess that many of the statements he has made on this question I am pleased to corroborate to the fullest degree. In the first place we must remember the purpose for which the Intercolonial Railway was built. Its construction was not carried out from an economic point of view but was regarded by the Fathers of Confederation as necessary to providing means of communication between the lower and upper provinces, and making Canada into one great dominion. Today I believe we are looking upon this railway system more particularly from an economic point of view, and I think we ought not to lose sight of the London agreement which was hidden away for so many years and upon which the British North America Act was framed. We in the maritime provinces feel that sometimes so far as railway rates are concerned, we are not treated on the same basis as other parts of Canada. Hon. members should take into consideration the distances over which freight has to be hauled in other parts of Canada and compare them with the distance in the maritime provinces; you in western and central Canada say that the distances are much shorter, yet your rates are lower than ours. At the same time hon. members forget that the Intercolonial railway was originally built by the people of Canada for the purpose of cementing the lower with the upper and central parts.

Saint John Valley Hit

I wish to make some further remarks in connection with the cut in the service of the railway companies. In the constituency I represent in the province of New Brunswick we have experienced a cut in service. I am not saying that the cut was not warranted; I do not stand here tonight for the purpose of saying that the railway companies of Canada should not be operated economically so that they may serve the interests of all the people of Canada. I do say, however, that the ex-Postmaster General made a rather unhappy comparison of the treatment which had been accorded to the people of the St. John river and the people in the constituency he represents. He tried to contrast the service in my constituency with that which had been accorded to the people of the county of Gloucester. Surely he knows that the very same treatment which was accorded to his people in the county of Gloucester was accorded to the people along the St. John River, namely, that when they had restrictions placed upon them in respect to the shipment of their potatoes in bags from Gloucester county the same restriction was placed upon the people along the St. John river. That restriction was placed upon us by the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National Railway companies. It applied to both companies at the same time. If my hon. friend had wanted to be fair he might have said that those farmers who shipped on what was known as the Gulf Shore and Caraquet railway did not ship their potatoes in bulk last fall when they could and should have shipped them, the same

as we did. They waited until this spring because they thought the price would be better. However these restrictions when they came into effect hurt them a little more than some of the other people in the province of New Brunswick. These are statements of fact which my hon. friend cannot refute; he knows they are true. There was no discrimination. So far as the railways are concerned I simply want to say the same rules were applied in connection with the St. John river district that applied to the Gloucester county section from which my hon. friend comes. At all times I shall try to say a word on behalf of the people of the maritime provinces, and on behalf not only of my own constituency but of the county represented by my hon. friend the ex-Postmaster General. I would be pleased to say a word on behalf of Prince Edward Island, or Nova Scotia, or any other portion of the maritime section of Canada. But, Mr. Chairman, I cannot refrain from challenging the statements which have been made by the ex-Postmaster General to the effect that there was discrimination in favor of the farmers along the St. John river against those in the county of Gloucester which he happens to represent.

Some Discussions

MR. VENIOT: Were you not allowed to ship potatoes in bulk in refrigerator cars?

MR. SMITH (Victoria-Carleton): Yes, and you were allowed to do the same thing at the same time.

MR. VENIOT: No, we were not.

MR. SMITH (Victoria-Carleton): I beg your pardon, you were.

The CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. VENIOT: Mr. Chairman—

MR. SMITH (Victoria-Carleton): There was no discrimination shown.

MR. VENIOT: We were refused the right. We had to send a delegation to Moncton to obtain the right to ship.

MR. SMITH (Victoria-Carleton): When were you refused the right.

The CHAIRMAN: Order. Hon members must address the chair.

MR. SMITH (Victoria-Carleton): We were refused the right at the same time.

MR. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I would like to take a minute or two of the time of this committee to speak to the question of the reduction of train service in the province of New Brunswick.

MR. GARDINER: Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order. Would you please tell me under what clause of this bill the present discussion is taking place?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clause 2—no, it is clause 1.

MR. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I would like to say—

MR. GARDINER: Is this discussion in order?

The CHAIRMAN: Well, as yet I have not heard any point of order taken.

MR. GARDINER: My point of order is that we are dealing with clause 2.

MR. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Well, let us stay at it for a little while.

MR. GARDINER: It is a clause concerning the appointment of a person to represent the Minister of Railways and Canals to investigate any matters pertaining to the Canadian National Railway. I submit, Mr. Speaker, the cutting off of train service does not come under this particular clause.

MR. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The question of the directors of the Canadian National Railways involves a matter of policy.

MR. GARDINER: I understand we are dealing with clause 2.

MR. HANSON (York-Sunbury): As I understand it we are dealing with clause 1.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 1.

MR. GARDINER: We are not.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the discussion should be confined to the clause under consideration, but it may to a certain extent involve the policy of the Government.

Mr. Hanson's View

Mr. R. B. Hanson (York-Sunbury): On that ground I would like to address a few remarks to the chair in answer to the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Veniot) who has made a very eloquent plea on behalf of his constituents. I wish to speak in a general way of the situation in the province of New Brunswick. There has been no discrimination against the county represented by the hon. member for Gloucester. All of us who are within the sphere and influence of the Canadian National Railways in the province of New Brunswick are feeling the pinch of the cut in the service. I feel that the people themselves in a degree are at fault because they are not patronizing the railway companies but are using the cheaper modes of travel such as motor busses and motor cars which are operating in direct competition and comfort with railroad traffic. That is the tendency all over the American continent, and it is one to which we cannot shut our eyes.

New Found Zeal

At the same time I have something further to say with respect to the management of the railways. I do not wish to interfere with or attempt to dictate to them, but I do think that in their new-found zeal for economy—and I use those words advisedly, having regard to what we have seen in relation to the operation of both railways in days gone by—in cutting to the bare bone they are going too far. I am not familiar with the railroad which traverses the country between Bathurst and Tracadie. In days gone by I had the discomfort by travelling over it, before it became part of the national system. The district through which the railway passes is very thickly populated, and I do not see how it can be served by a tri-weekly service. It seems to me that the railway should adopt a middle course, and if I can say anything in favour of their doing so I want to say it here and now. Instead of running an express and freight service over that 77 miles of road, as they have been doing in recent months, they have should run a mixed train daily up and down the entire section. By so doing they would save a very substantial sum of money. There are other portions of the province of New Brunswick served by the Canadian National Railways which are not being discriminated against by the cutting down of service that is being put in to effect in other sections, but in which the service has been reduced beyond what is reasonable in the circumstances. I think that will be the sense of members from the province representing the constituencies affected. I would suggest to my friend the Minister of Railways go too far, because if they do I believe they will defeat the very purpose they have in view.

In addition the question of postal service must be considered, only today I received representations from my constituency with relation to that particular matter. It is from the country lying between the city of Fredericton and the town of Woodstock, a distance of 65 miles, perhaps the oldest portion of settled country in the province of New Brunswick. To my knowledge it has been in enjoyment of a daily mail service for thirty years. That service is to be cut down to three times a week. I protest, I have suggested to the department that they put on a motor service to take care of the three days when the trains are not coming; that is a consideration in connection with the reduced service, and this alternative will cost a considerable sum of money. I would suggest that instead of going to the extreme that they have gone to in relation to the operation of these branch lines in New Brunswick, they endeavour to adopt a happy medium. This, I think, could be worked out and still save a large sum of money, without starving the service as in now proposed.

Mr. Hanbury: Do I understand from the minister that the directors are solely responsible for the direction and operation of the Canadian National Railways?

M. Manion: The directors in association with the managing officers of the railway, yes.

Mr. Hanbury: The directors are in control of the management, and they would have authority, if they wished, to make a change in the management?

The Minister

Mr. Manion: No, I should hardly like to say that. They are not in control of the management. I presume that if one of the high executive officers did something illegal or something that would justify his dismissal, the directors would have a good deal to say in the matter; but they are not in a position to dictate to the officers of the system.

Mr. Hanbury: The minister suggests, then, that the management is really not subject to the government?

Mr. Manion: Absolutely; so far as the administration of the system is concerned the government has not anything whatever to do with the management. In regard to these questions which we have been discussing for the last hour, the government has nothing whatever to do with them; the reductions in train service were decided by the management. May I say that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in the same way has decided to cut down its services on many lines. I have had some protests in the regard also, although not so many, because naturally the people think we have more influence in dealing with the national system. The cutting down of the train service is entirely a part of the policy of the Canadian National Railways management in an endeavour to bring their expenditure somewhere near their revenue. May I point out to my hon. friend (Mr. Hanson) who a moment ago on behalf of New Brunswick dealt generally with the subject in an excellent speech, that while it is true that the mail service may be interested with by such reduction in train service. I think it is hardly fair to say that the Canadian National Railways with a heavy deficit, should be asked to handle at a loss the mail service. Any additional cost for such service, say \$10,000 should be undertaken by the Post Office department, or, if you will, by the country generally.

Mr. Stewart (Edmonton): Does not my hon. friend think the country is putting up enough now?

Mr. Manion: I think the country is putting up too much now.

Mr. Sanderson: Is not the public now paying the deficits of the Canadian National Railways?

Mr. Manion: I should say the public is paying.

LESSONS END—

GOAT EATS BOOK

Seattle, April 29—The art of jiu-jitsu is not only useful in handling stubborn criminals, but it has proved equally potent in subduing wild goats of Siam.

W. Jamadhi, of the Royal Bangkok police, obtained a copy of S. J. Jorgenson's book on jiu-jitsu and taught it to his patrolmen. Jorgenson, a Seattle patrolman, recently received a letter from the official, describing the fate of the book and ordering six additional copies. The letter reads:

"Kindly sir: Honored Bangkok police have found your gentle book of jiu-jitsu much valuable for teaching tricks but book has gone, due to unfortunate accident for which goat is responsible, him eating book.

"For this we shall enclose sum and beg of you to send us six more copies. Goat is much sick and book is of no use. Honored Bangkok police have much delight and good humor in putting jiu-jitsu through paces, but goat does not find joy in its pages now since partaking."

New York, N. Y., April 30—Movie houses in New York's East Side are almost paying boys and girls to patronize them. Here is what one theater offers as an inducement for admission, which is only 10 cents:

"Free chocolate bar with every ticket."

"Please two of which admit one, free."

Also, juvenile movie fans who draw lucky numbers are given "pay envelopes" containing a sum of money, varying with the whims of the manager. And the kiddies may view two "feature films" besides extra reels of comedies and news topics.

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