

C. F. BAILEY'S ADDRESS AT FARMERS'-DAIRYMEN'S CONVENTION

Following are excerpts from the address delivered by C. F. Bailey at the Farmers' and Dairymen's convention at Saint John yesterday.

"It is quite apparent that the horse population in North America has been greatly reduced during the past decade. For example, the horse population in the United States between the years 1924 and 1934 has been reduced by 5,423,000. In Canada during the same period, the number of horses has been reduced by 655,000. In the province of New Brunswick the situation is somewhat different in that there were 50,000 horses in 1924 and the number has increased to 51,000 in 1934. However, if we go back to 1914, we find that there were 65,000 horses in New Brunswick, a falling off in the last twenty years of 15,000. It is generally recognized, however, that the wastage in New Brunswick during the past decade has been taken care of largely through the importation of horses from Western Canada. The difference in our horse population of today as compared with 1914 is no doubt due in a large measure to the fact that there were quite a number of colts reared at that time.

A brief review of the horse situation in Canada would seem advisable at this time. In the beginning of the 20th century Western Canada made rather rapid development. A large number of people from Eastern Canada and Europe settled in the western provinces annually. This condition created a demand for all kinds of live stock and the horse market was particularly active for a number of years. A large number of horsemen in Ontario and Quebec imported pure bred

draft stallions and mares from Great Britain annually which found a ready market in western Canada at attractive prices. There was also a strong demand for work horses from the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Many of these horses, however, were not of a very high standard. In many instances, horses suffering from heaves were sold in the western provinces because these horses did not show the systems when they reached the higher altitude in the west. In more recent years, however, the situation has been reversed. Western Canada had a surplus of horses due in part to extensive horse breeding operations, but to a considerable extent to the more general use of farm tractors. In the meantime, conditions in Eastern Canada improved and many farmers became uninterested in horse breeding and depended almost entirely on western Canada to supply the horses necessary to take care of the annual wastage. However, many of these horses have been very unsatisfactory—a number of them suffered from heaves, some very difficult to break, and what is even more important, they cost more than our farmers can afford to pay under present day conditions.

It is pleasing to note that New Brunswick farmers are beginning to take an active interest in horse breeding. It is quite generally recognized that colts can be reared on the average farm economically and the money formerly invested in western horses kept at home. Unfortunately, however, there is still a lack of sufficient good draft stallions in the province and it is also difficult at present to find draft mares that are suitable for breeding purposes.

While it is important that good stallions be secured for breeding purposes, too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the importance of securing first class breed mares. The selection of the breed of draft horses can be left largely to the individual or preferably to a community. However, it is important that once a breed has been selected, that it be continued indefinitely. In other words, if a farmer or a community wishes to establish a reputation for high class draft horses, progress in this direction will be seriously handicapped if a Clydesdale stallion is used in a district one year and a Percheron the next. In other words, such a policy will lead to mixed breeding and make it impossible to fix the type and quality of the horses in the district. The majority of the mares used for breeding purposes in the province are much too small.

Care of Brood Mares

For best results breed mares should be well cared for during pregnancy. Too large a percentage of mares bred, fail to produce living foals. Breed mares should be bred for the first

FATHER OF THE RAILWAY COMMISSION

In connection with a very interesting series of articles by Fred Cook, veteran journalist, being published in the Moncton Times, there appears a sketch of Hon. A. G. Blair, Father of the Railway Commission. This is of particular interest to friends and admirers in this city of the late Hon. Mr. Blair.

Father of the Railway Commission
In the "Cabinet of all the Talents," which was formed on July 13, 1896, there were four outstanding men who were new to the federal arena. They were Mr. Fielding from Nova Scotia, Sir Oliver Mowat from Ontario; Mr. Blair from New Brunswick, and Mr. Sifton from Manitoba.

The three first named had been provincial premiers, while Mr. Sifton had been attorney-general in Manitoba for five years until he was appointed minister of the interior at Ottawa. All four have passed away, after carving for themselves political history. Probably I know Mr. Blair more intimately than the other three. Affable, genial, a man of broad vision and a capable administrator, he was also a democrat to the hilt.

As is well known, Mr. Blair was first chairman of the Railway Commission, of which he was the father confessor. In my capacity, as a recorder of the days, doings in Ottawa over a long period of years, it fell to my lot to attend the open meetings of the commission in the early days. There were some important questions to be argued and decided; railway rates, telephone rates and other matters, in which the public was vitally interested.

At the first meeting, Mr. Z. A. Lash, K.C., I think it was, rose to address the commissioners. He commenced

his remarks with, "My lords," but was promptly stopped by the chairman. In a kindly way Mr. Blair said counsel might just as well follow a certain indicated procedure. They were not appearing before a body like the Supreme Court, but a working commission which would probably deal more with facts than with legal questions, and therefore it would be well for counsel to dispense with the formalities used in the law courts. It would be quite sufficient to address the commissioners as "Mr. Chairman," or "Mr. Commissioner," as the case might be. Having thus laid down the procedure, it has been followed to this day.

Mr. Blair was naturally classed as a Liberal when he came to Ottawa as minister of railways under Laurier, but to those who did not know New Brunswick politics well it was curious to find men sitting opposite to Mr. Blair in the House of Commons and opposing the policies of the Laurier government, who, in provincial politics, had been stalwart supporters of the minister of railways. It was an evidence of the manner in which Mr. Blair could draw men to him; he was a most likeable man.

As an administrator Andrew George Blair ranks as one of the best ministers of railway since Confederation. When he took charge of the department the Intercolonial Railway was in poor condition. The tracks had been allowed to run down, the rolling stock was inferior; the entire system was anything but a credit to Canada. Previous ministers may have been hampered by lack of funds because the revenues were not sufficient to allow of necessary improvements. Mr. Blair, however, insisted that the road should be put in first class shape and he got his way. Parliament found the money, and, instead of being a discredit, the Intercolonial was converted into a first class railway system.

Mr. Blair's magnum opus in Parliament, passed at the session of 1903, was the present Railway Act, chap. 170 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, the feature of which was the creation of the Board of Railway Commissioners, and consisting of three members. Previous to the introduction of the bill a special report written by Dr. S. J. McLean, professor of economics in Leland

Stanford University, California, and who is now serving his third term as assistant chief commissioner of the Railway Board, was made public. Dr. McLean, at the minister's request had spent three years studying the practical application of railway rates in Canada and of railway regulations generally. Regarding the then existing system of oversight by the Railway Committee of the Privy Council at Ottawa, he reported that the dual functions of political and administrative control was a serious difficulty; that complaints could not be properly investigated; that there was no migratory organization for investigating grievances; that distances were far too great to enable complainants to appear before it, and that there was a lack of technical training on the part of those in the department who had to advise upon railway matter.

These drawbacks, Dr. McLean contended, could be overcome by the creation of a railway commission with full authority in regard to rates, preferences, discriminations, rebates, etc., hitherto held by the railway committee of council. He also recommended supervision of through rates and routes, and the granting of equal facilities for shipments for all; regulatory control of traffic agreements; supervision of crossings and safety appliances; control of stock and bond issues, and advisory power over railway bills coming before Parliament. A further suggestion was that the proposed board should be a migratory organization; that the convenience of the public should be the paramount consideration; that the commission should go to the people, not compel applicants to come to Ottawa, except in special cases. All these recommendations were accepted by the minister practically in full, and constitute the backbone of the commission's jurisdiction, as it exists today.

The bill, consisting of 460 clauses, had a preliminary canter in the Commons in 1902. Mr. Blair's idea was to get it before the country so that when the time came for Parliament to grapple with it, members would be fully cognizant of its provisions. Beyond its presentation at this particular session no action was taken, but in 1903 it was brought down early, the minister of railways himself acting as pilot. Many days were devoted to the bill in committee and Mr. Blair's skill and tact in handling a difficult problem won universal approbation. There was no surprise evinced by the men behind the scenes

ENFORCED WASTE

Two streaks of rust held together by rotting ties on a weed-grown right of way and traversed once a day by a leaky, rusty relic of an engine pulling eight or ten assorted cars, some less than half full. This is a picture of one tenth or more of the railroad mileage of the United States. Can it be of enough use to warrant its continued operation?

Charles D. Mahaffie, chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission the other day criticized the refusal by a majority of the commission to authorize abandonment of a 21-mile line in southern Kansas. Said he:

This case represents a situation that is common. Much railroad mileage built in the days of wagon hauls over dirt roads has been rendered obsolete by the development of trucks and by road improvement. To continue to maintain and operate such mileage is an economic waste. We ought not to stand in the way of necessary revision. Truck transportation is here to stay. Railroad transportation is still essential. If it is to be maintained on a sound basis, the railroad plant and service must be adjusted to present conditions.

Nearly five years ago the commission said in the Sumpter Valley case that when a community by its patronage expresses a choice for motor transportation, it must realize that the small or branch railroad "may not be able to continue to exist without such patronage and that abandonment must follow as a last resort." Yet a railroad cannot abandon operation without permission from the commission.

as they knew that the minister had supervised the drafting of practically every clause.

In fifteen years the commission has authorized abandonment of 16,263 miles of short and branch lines. The total mileage now is just under 244,000. Abandonments authorized during the last year amounted to 1,692 miles. The Brookings Institution in 1932 found that railroad officials very conservatively admitted nearly 6,000 miles of their lines to be unprofitable on the basis of such a good year as 1929. Since then more than that much track has been abandoned but doubtless much more would be admitted to be unprofitable now. It found that nearly 40,000 miles of line carried traffic equivalent to less than ten full cars of freight a day—a density light enough to raise serious question whether operation could be economically justifiable.

Chairman Mahaffie's dissent deserves to be underlined and thoughtfully considered by his colleagues.

Crutch for Eyelids Developed by Science

CHICAGO, Illinois, Jan. 14.—A new type of crutch for eyelids that won't stay open was announced today in the archives of ophthalmology.

The crutches, which look like the antennae of butterflies or moths, are attached to the bridge of the patient's spectacles. Made of piano wire protected by rubber tubing, they are curved to fit the folds of the upper eyelid. They are recommended for persons suffering from ptosis, paralytic drooping of the eyelids.

The crutches were developed by Dr. W. M. Dodge, Jr., of the department of ophthalmology, Battle Creek sanitarium, Battle Creek, Michigan.

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