

Mr. McIsaac's Speech On The Budget

(Continued from page 1.)

That was the condition that the people of Prince Edward Island desired most. Prince Edward Island became a member of the Dominion of Canada in 1873. About three and a half years later, the first attempt was made to implement the above promise by putting the steamer Northern Light on the route between Prince Edward Island and the mainland. The Northern Light, which was a fairly good ship with a wooden hull, commenced plying between Georgetown and Pictou on the 25th December, 1876. In that winter she managed to make thirty-five round trips between the Island and the mainland, and for twelve years this was the only steamer, making anywhere from twenty-five to sixty round trips each winter. After the Northern Light had served for those twelve years, the Government of Canada supplied the steel steamer Stanley for service between Prince Edward Island and the mainland. The Stanley was a splendid ship, well proportioned in regard to size and power. She was not a large ship; the horsepower of her engines was not very great, but she did good service. To show what an excellent ship the Stanley has been, after thirty years' service she is at the present time doing service for the Government of Canada. Just recently she was commissioned to go to the Magdalen Islands to take the first relief to those people after the winter. She has, as a matter of fact, been there during the winter, and she has been going around in the ice relieving other ships that have become ice-bound. On the 3rd day of January, 1900, the steamship Minto, which came out from the old country in the previous autumn, was put into the service in conjunction with the Stanley. She was a more powerful steamer than the Stanley, but it is a matter of doubt whether or not she did very much better service than the Stanley. Those two boats were doing pretty fair service. The Minto continued in service until 1915. Later on the Earl Grey, a splendid ship, was commissioned for the service, and she started in the winter of 1909. The Earl Grey, which was a large ship had very powerful engines, but I have been told more than once—I am not positive as to this—that her hull was not strong enough for her engine-power, and as a result she was unable to give as good service as she would had her hull been able to stand the full power of the machinery.

At this stage, before I proceed any further about the steamers, I wish to say this: As I said in the beginning, I am not here to complain as to the service which was done during those years by these steamers to keep up communication with the mainland in the winter time. I am simply giving a brief history of the service, and I am willing to give thanks where thanks are due. I am willing that those who did the service should receive due consideration and thanks therefor. While the steamers were doing very well there was in the minds of the people of Prince Edward Island all through those years an idea that those steamers were not giving such service as they considered would be carrying out, practically and fairly, the terms of Confederation. There was always that idea of instability, of lack of finality, that this was not the best service that could be had, and that some other means should be taken to bring about a better service. There grew up an idea that a tunnel could be constructed under the straits of Northumberland, a distance of nine miles, and that by that means the people of Prince Edward Island would have no diffi-

culty, during the winter in keeping in constant communication with the mainland. The agitation for the tunnel went on for a number of years, and assumed very considerable proportions. That shows the people down there were not satisfied, and that some better means of communication must be provided before the terms on which Prince Edward Island entered Confederation could be regarded as having been satisfactorily carried out. At different times the leading statesmen of Canada have had occasion to visit Prince Edward Island, generally in the summer, but sometimes in the winter. These distinguished visitors who came in the winter time were subjected to all the hardships and inconveniences entailed in crossing the Straits of Northumberland in an iceboat. I might add that there was hardly a winter when the iceboats had not to be used for a month or two, as the steamers could not get through the ice. Very often the people would be without mails for several days, until the iceboats were brought into requisition. In 1891 the present leader of the Opposition in this House visited Prince Edward Island in the winter season, and, I believe, he was subjected to the hardship and inconvenience of crossing Northumberland Strait in an iceboat. The matter was brought to his attention at all events, and on his return he wrote a letter to the editor of the Charlottetown Guardian, dated February 19, 1891, as follows:

Dear Sir: I have your favour of the 2nd of February. I hardly thought that an expression of opinion as to the construction of a tunnel to connect the Island of Prince Edward with the mainland should be required. Every man who has given any attention to the condition of things and the necessities involved by the Island entering into confederation must admit that such a tunnel must be constructed if the thing is reasonably practicable. The first thing to be done is to have an accurate survey and estimates. I am only sorry that it was not done long ago.

Yours very truly,

Wilfrid Laurier.

So in 1891 he was strongly in favour of a tunnel if at all practicable. A few years afterwards the right hon. gentleman took the reins of power in Canada. What representations were made to him thereafter regarding a tunnel I do not know, but I am informed that he has never done anything towards building the tunnel except writing the letter I have just read. Let me tell what happened to those winter steamers. The largest of them all, the Earl Grey, was sold to the Russian Government in 1914, and in 1915 the Minto was also sold to that Government. There must be a tiny bit of regret in our souls when we reflect that these steamers, which have done such fine service in our part of the country, are now being used perhaps by the Bolsheviks or even by the Germans. I should like to read a despatch in a paper that has just been placed in my hands about the steamer Stanley. The ice seems to have a spite against the Stanley and never wants to let her get through. The despatch is as follows:

Halifax, N.S., May 2.—The Naval Department here has despatched a tug to the assistance of the Dominion Government steamer Stanley, before reported in distress at a point twenty-five miles off East Point, P.E.I., while en route from Louisbourg, C.B., with mails for the Magdalen Islands. The first message from the Stanley stated that her rudder had been carried away. Last night the Marine and Fisheries Department had a wireless from her saying that temporary repairs had been made to the rudder, but that it was impossible for her to get through the ice floes.

I now turn to another phase of this question. In the year 1911 the right hon. gentleman who leads this Government visited Prince Edward Island. The question of winter communication between the Island and the mainland was brought before him and he made this statement (it may not be word for word, but it is substantially what he said):

I am willing to admit that in this beautiful and fertile province you have been labouring under serious handicaps ever

since your entry into Confederation on account of your want of proper communication. I am so seriously impressed with this fact and the knowledge that although some serious attempts have been made to abate this condition, I may tell you that if elected to power I shall use every practical means either by tunnel, which has been much advocated, car ferry or some such mode best known to the scientists of to-day, to implement the terms of Confederation which thus far have been in abeyance.

This was the statement made in 1911. This was not a mere empty promise, but it was a promise that had behind it earnestness, sincerity and the determination to fulfill it should the promise be placed in a position where he would be able to do it. I want to tell you that that promise was carried out. A car ferry, the latest and greatest accomplishment of marine architecture and engineering as far as ice breakers are concerned, was built for the service between Prince Edward Island and the mainland and came to Canada in the summer of 1915. It was placed in commission between the Island and the mainland in the winter of 1916. It was not placed where it is now plying for the reason that there were no terminals where the steamer could have docked. It plied between Charlottetown or Georgetown and Pictou performing admirable service. It did not give its ideal service plying between these ports because the car ferry is a steamer on which are two lines of rails that can accommodate six cars each. The ferry is capable of carrying twelve Intercolonial railway freight cars across the straits of Northumberland every time it makes a trip.

The cost of the car ferry was \$670,000. In addition to supplying the steamer, terminals were arranged for and built, one on the Prince Edward Island side which now most appropriately bears the name of Port Borden, and one on the new Brunswick side at Cape Tormentine. These terminals cost \$2,205,000. The car ferry and the terminals at present in operation cost \$2,875,000. That, Sir, is the way in which the right hon. Prime Minister carried out his promise to Prince Edward Island.

But, that is not all. In order that the car ferry may be effective, that it may do the work which it was intended to do, it is necessary that the narrow gauge Prince Edward Island railway shall be standardized and become of the same gauge as the Intercolonial railway on the mainland, so that cars taking their departure from any part of Prince Edward Island may go to all portions of North America. The intention was to broaden the gauge of the Prince Edward Island railway, but, like many other projects of great importance contemplated by the Government, it became necessary, in consequence of the war, and the enormous expenditure involved in carrying it out, that the completion of this portion of the connection between Prince Edward Island and the mainland should wait until times are better and money will be easier to obtain.

During the past winter, for the first time, the car ferry plied between Port Borden and Cape Tormentine, and the success that has attended its operations during a winter of unprecedented severity has revolutionized the ideas of the people of the island regarding their connection with the mainland. They now feel for the first time that they are a part of Canada, that they are not isolated as they have been in past years. Here is the proof. There was not a day during the winter that the car ferry could not cross in those heavy ice flows, and on some days make two or three round trips. It is able to make the passage in fifty minutes under favorable circumstances, and at no time was it more than three hours in making the crossing. There was not a day upon which it might not have crossed, although there were a few days when it did not cross because there were no trains on either side and consequently nothing to cross for.

What we desire now is to have the Prince Edward Island railway standardized. We would like to see this work commenced as soon as possible, but no one realizes more fully than the people of Prince Edward Island that this is not a time when we should ask

for extra appropriations when so much of our money is required to carry on the war. The standardization of the Prince Edward Island railway could be regarded in the light of a war measure. Prince Edward Island is an agricultural province, and it is extremely productive—in fact, we have really no idea of the extent of its productivity—but if facilities are afforded for the transportation of the island's products it is capable of increasing its agricultural production at least a hundredfold. If that be true, Sir, and if we can contribute that much more towards feeding the soldiers than we are now doing, would it not be sufficient ground for the Government undertaking the work of standardization without delay? It is for the Government to say when the work shall begin, but the people of the island would like to see it started forthwith. If that were done the output of Prince Edward Island's products would be augmented to such an extent that it would be by no means a losing speculation for the Government.

Let me give further reasons why, in my opinion, it would be wise for the Government to undertake this work now. The operation of the narrow gauge car at present used costs about as much as does the operation of the great car used on the Intercolonial railway, so that the improvement suggested would effect a saving there. Economies could also be brought about by a change in the system of handling produce. At present all freight shipped from Prince Edward Island goes to Port Borden, where it is transferred from narrow gauge to broad gauge cars, and then the cars are run on to the ferry and carried to the mainland. The cost of transferring freight in this way is from four to five thousand dollars a month. Now, taking the annual cost as \$50,000 or \$60,000, that amount capitalized would be equal to about \$1,000,000, or, in other words, it would represent about one half the cost of standardizing the road, as far as I am able to learn, in order to handle the increased volume of freight. Last year owing to want of transportation, there were two million bushels of potatoes that could not be carried away from Prince Edward Island. More than that, the numerous steamships carrying freight from the island to other points—for example, to Newfoundland, Montreal, Boston and Halifax—have all, or nearly all, been eliminated owing to the abnormal conditions brought about by the war. As we all know, Mr. Speaker, almost any kind of vessel that is available is eagerly picked up now for war transportation purposes, with the result that Prince Edward Island shipments are confined to the one route via Port Borden.

Another point arises in connection with the shipment of coal. In our province there are no coal mines, and coal has to be imported from Nova Scotia and other places. The volume of coal necessary to be transported by the car ferry, in addition to all the other products to which I have referred, represents something like forty thousand tons. There is this further point to be borne in mind: It is expected that Prince Edward Island, as a result of the campaign in favour of increased production will this year have added some seventy-five thousand acres more. The product of this area representing probably fifty-six thousand tons, will also need to be transported. All this great volume of freight representing a total of something like 247,840 tons—calculating from the figures of last year's exports and taking into consideration the freight that was held up and could not be forwarded—will have to go by the car ferry during the present year. The present export facilities will therefore not be adequate, and as they involve a transfer it means delay and an increased outlay of money.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, I am not wearying the House, but even at the risk of doing so, I must present the case for my province. I am talking on behalf of those who sent me here and who expect me to do my duty, and it is in the humble endeavour to discharge that duty that I am making my plea to the House this afternoon.

In addition to the expenditures which I have already referred to, it will cost to begin with, prob-

ably four or five hundred thousand dollars to put the narrow gauge railway as it now exists, into a condition for handling business this summer. Again, there is the further expense of transferring the freight, and handling the additional freight that will need transportation. These figures will indicate to you the extraordinary disadvantage from which Prince Edward Island is suffering at the present time; and in my opinion the improvements desired and the elimination of these extra costs would not involve such a large grant from the Federal exchequer as it would if none of these subsidiary conditions prevailed.

There are other items that might be introduced to swell the total cost. There are for example, the claims against the Government which may be brought any day arising out of the loss of potatoes and other perishable goods owing to the failure of the narrow-gauge railway to move them from the island. Adding all the items together, I estimate \$336,409 as the amount which the Government stands called upon to pay under present conditions.

There are other reasons why the people of Prince Edward Island should have the railway gauge broadened and its standardization commenced. They are reasons which will be beneficial to the Dominion, and to Prince Edward Island especially. During the past winter, it cost \$67,000 to fight the show-stoppers blocking the road, which had to be shovelled out. Every one acquainted with railways will understand that with a broad gauge and more powerful engines the snow blockade could be better handled and its inconvenience reduced to a minimum at a much smaller cost.

There is the movement of certain perishable products also to be considered. In addition to being a great agricultural province, the richest and most abundant fisheries abound on our coast. The fresh fish industry would secure the best results from the quickest possible transportation to the markets on the mainland. If the beautiful fish that we catch on the coast of Prince Edward Island could be shipped from there in the morning and brought into Montreal—for instance, the next morning, fresh from the sea, would that not be something worth working for? Prince Edward Island would benefit by it, and certainly other parts of Canada would not lose by it. There are other perishable products which should get to the markets in the shortest possible time and in the best possible condition. We have no hope that this ever can be done until we have the gauge standardized. Standardization will come sometime; we have got so far ahead now, and the conditions that I have laid down seem to me to be of sufficient force to be some inducement to the Government to take up the work at as early a date as possible. Altogether, apart from the sentimental question, there is no longer any doubt in Prince Edward Island about the feasibility of practical daily communication, winter and summer, between the Island and the mainland. The problem involved in the winter navigation of the straits is solved, and we feel that at last, we have taken the first and greatest stride forward towards being really part of Canada. We no longer feel ourselves isolated. We only wish the completion of the railroad, standardization to make our railroad situation as that of any other part of Canada, and to enable us to ship our products from any part of the Island to any part of North America without breaking bulk, and that any passenger boarding a train on the Island will not be obliged to leave his car until he reaches his destination. Those are reasons which appeal to us, and I wish I was sufficiently persuasive to convince the Government that now is the time to standardize the Prince Edward Island Railway. If I could convince them I feel sure that within a short time the work would be commenced.

I do not know that I shall trespass upon your patience any further, Mr. Speaker, unless to thank you very sincerely for the generous hearing that has been accorded to me, upon these matters so dear to the hearts of the people of Prince Edward Island, the first time that I have risen in Parliament to address you.

Progress of the War

London May 7.—In the enemy countries a curious situation exists. While the Kaiser and Von Hindenburg talk of "new roads" to victorious German commerce, Austrian labor is demanding the eight hour and is protesting against the food shortage. The louder the pan-Germans cry for "strong peace," the sharper are the protests of the Austrian masses against the prolongation of the war. In neutral countries the peace offensive is causing less excitement because most of observers believe that much heavy fighting must come before the belligerents will be ready to gather around the table. The effect of the plethora of peace rumors is shown plainly in the press which has turned suddenly from one extreme to the other. Having just passed through a period of grave anxiety, the newspapers now pretend to see in the military pause the collapse of the German offensive power.

London, May 8.—After a heavy bombardment on a wide front in Flanders, the German infantry this morning launched an attack south of Diekebusch Lake, which lies between Ypres and Kemmel. Says Reuters's correspondent at British headquarters:

"The attack apparently was only in divisional strength, but it may develop larger proportions. The enemy seems to have penetrated our front line between the Lake and ridge Wood and some parties of Germans are reported in the eastern wood itself. The fighting was in fine weather. We still hold the major part of the wood and also Klein Veerst. The technical objective of the enemy operation seems to be an attempt to clear the way for a thrust toward Scherpenberg from the northeast and it may prove to be the beginning of more fierce fighting in this region."

London May 8.—In an attack against the British and French lines between Lacleto and Voormezele, in the Ypres sector, the Germans early this morning succeeded, after heavy fighting, in entering the allied front line positions at certain points according to Field Marshal Haig's official communication issued this evening. The communication adds that at all other points the enemy met with repulses. This morning the enemy launched a strong local attack against French and British troops in the sector between Lacleto and Voormezele, and in the center his attack succeeded, after heavy fighting in entering the front line of the allied positions, at certain points. The fighting continued intense. At all other points the enemy attacks were repulsed. "By successful local operations the French troops advanced their line during the night south of Lacleto and captured a number of prisoners. On the remainder of British front there was nothing special to report."

London, May 10.—Though the guns are booming loudly in many sectors of the battle front and a bright day furnished ideal fighting weather, the German infantry still awaiting the word to begin the next attack. The artillery duel on the Somme presages an early resumption of artillery operations. Amiens is now showing many battle scars. It has been under fire for several days. The Germans are making their preparations cleverly, but there seems to be good reason to expect a heavy blow to the south of Amiens, just as the signs point to a drive south of Ypres.

The clear weather of last few days has given the allied airmen an opportunity to observe the tremendous amount of work which the enemy has done since his drive halted east of Amiens a month ago. Light railways, bridges and corduroy roads have been built. Heavy howitzers have been brought up and great quantities of ammunition and stores have been carted across the devastated area. Behind his lines there is the industry and activity of a million "ants" for the next blow is intended to be a mighty effort equalling if not exceeding in power the March drive. The Germans know that on this side of the line similar preparations are going on and

that their task will be much heavier than when they hit the thin British line.

What is true on the Somme holds good for Ypres, but in the north the force is hardly half of that on the southern battle front. The allied communications have been greatly improved in the last fortnight. American railway engineers deserve no small credit for their skill and speed in laying the tracks along the new routes. The lines which come under the fire of the German guns and airplanes have been repaired and in some cases entirely new roadbeds have been made. Ludendorff's communications, one of his greatest assets in this gigantic battle, have been bombed heavily for many nights. The allied air service is maintaining its superiority over the Germans, who sadly miss their star, Capt. Baron Von Richthofen. Especially in the preliminaries to the struggle does air superiority count. Foch has had an opportunity to dispose of his forces to the greatest advantage and to prepare for emergencies.

London, May 12.—The German armies in Flanders and Picardy are still inactive. Except for their artillery wings, which are carrying out bombardments on various sectors, they are doing little work anywhere. Evidently the enemy is not yet prepared to test his strength against the reinforced lines of resistance, although it is still anticipated that the day is not far distant when he again will try to break through the allied front. Meanwhile the British and French armies are letting no opportunity pass to peek at the German points where the enemy front is considered particularly vulnerable. North of Kemmel the French have recovered another slice of territory in a sharp fight in which they came into hand-to-hand combat with the Germans. In addition more than 100 prisoners were taken.

The Germans endeavored to offset this advantage by an attack against the French north-west of Orville-Sorel, but the defenders turned their artillery on the enemy and successfully withstood the attack, inflicting heavy casualties and capturing more prisoners. Considerable activity is in progress in the Italian theatre. Between Asiago and the Brenta River on the northern fronts, the Italians have stormed Austrian positions at Col Del Orso and destroyed the garrison in hand-to-hand fighting.

At several other points along the northern front the Italians have worsted the enemy in engagements evidently started with the intention of rectifying the line. The Austrian emperor, accompanied by his foreign minister, has paid a visit to the Italian front, afterwards proceeding to German headquarters. The taking of the initiative into their hands apparently augurs well for the morale of the Italians, and it is not improbable that, with the snow in the mountain passes having melted and the spring freshets on the wane, it is their purpose now to make things interesting for the invaders.

London May 12.—Wireless messages sent from the Russian government to Berlin make disclosures regarding German methods in Russia. One complaint deals with a message received by the Ukrainian colony in Petrograd from Ukrainians in which it is stated that the frontier has been closed by the Germans to all Ukrainians. The evacuation of Ukrainians from Russia is being carried out by means of wagons under terrible conditions, particularly for the sick and for children. It could be effected easily by the river Dnieper, the message says, but this route has been closed to Ukrainians by the Germans. Count Von Mirbach, German ambassador to Russia, to whom the Ukrainians applied for assistance, declared his inability to do anything. The Russian government begs the German foreign office to bring pressure to bear on the German government, because the needs of the Ukrainian refugees are very great.

MINARDS LINIMENT CURES GARGET IN COWS.

Gen. Maurice's Charges Against Government

London, May 6.—Major General Sir Frederick Barton Maurice, Director of Military operations at the War Office from 1915 until recently when Brigadier General D. E. L. Radcliffe, succeeded him, addressed a letter to several of the morning papers which has created an extreme sensation. General Maurice challenges the accuracy of certain statements made in the House of Commons, with regard to the military situation, by Lloyd George and Bonar Law, and demands a Parliamentary investigation. General Maurice's letter raises as serious an issue as any that has confronted the British people, speaking from the domestic point of view, since the war has begun. His direct challenge to the accuracy of the ministerial statements is regarded as a most serious indictment of the Government. On all hands, it is recognized that a most critical period has been opened. General Maurice's letter closes with these words: "My reasons for taking the very grave step of writing this letter are that the statements quoted above are known to a large number of soldiers to be incorrect; and that knowledge is breeding such distrust of the Government as can only end by impairing the splendid morale of our troops at a time when everything possible should be done to raise it. I ask you to publish this letter in the hope that parliament may see fit to order an investigation into the statements I have made."

Andrew Bonar Law, the Government spokesman in the House of Commons announced that the Government proposed to ask two judges to act as a court of honor in the investigation of the charges made by General Maurice. The motion introduced by former Premier Asquith providing for the appointment of a special committee to investigate the charges made by Major General Frederick B. Maurice, was voted down by a vote of 293 to 196.

London, May 10.—The most talked of man in England today is General Frederick B. Maurice, formerly chief director of military operations at the war office.

If some volunteer general, or some soldier who had graduated from politics or business into soldiering, had defied and "trampled upon all the laws and traditions of the British army and all armies, he would not have excited such enormous surprise as has General Maurice in his famous letter impugning the veracity of the ministry. Had some less well-trained officer written the letter, it would of been put down to lack of tradition and a disregard of the conventionalities by a citizen soldier.

His receptions to the correspondents have not been interviews, but lectures. The correspondents filed into the sanctuary at the war office at the appointed minute. Any man who was late found the door barred against him. Military usage demanded promptness, and General Maurice would not forgive or excuse a lack of it.

A tall blonde gentleman with a fresh pink complexion and a monocle, surrounded by maps of all sorts—contour maps, flat maps, maps of elevation—all marked with flags, with numbers and with red-blue and yellow pencil marks, faced the correspondents. General Maurice dealt with all those maps as Paderewski deals with the keys of a piano. He knows every detail of them.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," was the greeting; never anything more; no word was wasted in gossip or persiflage. Standing before the maps with a professional manner and in language so precise that his stenographer would not need to correct it, the general stated the military situation. Having finished, the general paused for questions. All answerable questions were replied to promptly and incisively, with no elaboration. He was one of those "who suffer fools badly." Foolish questions occasionally were asked by amateur strategists. He crushed them quickly and curtly. He did not parry with them.

The "Bonus" Captain C. J. Straight, Victoria, is loaded ready for her first trip of the season to Pictou, with the following produce, shipped by Wright Bros.: 2400 bus. oats, 550 bags red potatoes, 750 bags blue potatoes, 66 bags white potatoes, 15 bags turnips, 25 bags timothy seed.