

P. E. I. Railway Problem

(Special Correspondence.)

Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Hand in hand with the movement to increase production in Prince Edward Island is the agitation now being made by our people to have the gauge of the P. E. Island Railway standardized.

A delegation representing both parties in the Provincial Legislature and the Boards of Trade of Charlottetown and Summerside have gone to Ottawa to urge upon the Government the need of having this essential work done.

The first point taken up by the delegation was the alarming decline in our water borne traffic. In 1911 2,465 steamers and sailing vessels with an aggregate tonnage of 51,800 cleared from Charlottetown. Last year this was reduced to 1,694 with a tonnage of 171,000. Moreover a few years ago many fishing vessels from Nova Scotia made fall trips to the Island carrying coal inward and farm produce outward. Since the war this traffic has ceased. At one time we had a large fleet of small coasting vessels and these have almost all vanished. The whole of this water traffic has been diverted to Port Borden, there to be carried across in the Car Ferry to Tormentine. Thus has been imposed upon our railway system an almost impossible task.

In October and November last an average of 48 cars of potatoes daily left the Island for the mainland by the Car Ferry and by Government steamers plying between Summerside and Pt. du Chene and Charlottetown and Pictou. As the two latter routes have been eliminated and assuming the traffic remains stationary, 48 cars daily will be handled by the Car Ferry route next October. This is not a fair criterion as the embargo on potatoes last November curtailed the output. Half a million bushels were shipped from the Island last fall, but if the gauge had been widened an additional half million bushels could have been handled.

This fall there will be a large importation of coal which did not occur last year. To meet the requirements of the Province it will be necessary to import at least 30,000 tons on 12 cars daily between the first of June and the thirty-first of December. Based on the trade of 1917 87 cars daily would have to be transferred at Borden during October and November next, and if the expected increase in food products is realized there will be 102 cars daily during these months.

After having examined all temporary methods of relief the delegation concluded that the only proper and permanent solution of the difficulty is the standardization of the gauge. This should be undertaken at the earliest possible moment so that a portion of the road may be ready for traffic before the crops are moved.

The distance between Borden and Summerside and Charlottetown is 65 miles and the total length of the Island railway is 275 miles. Of the imports to the Island last year via the C. G. R. 70 per cent. was to Charlottetown and 15 per cent. was to Summerside. Therefore, 85 per cent. of the inward traffic passes over these 65 miles and 35 per cent. of the exports also are handled on this short section. The widening of the gauge between the above-mentioned points as an initial step would greatly relieve the situation. It would eliminate the waste in handling and provide quick transit between terminals. It would release the rolling stock now used between Borden, Summerside and Charlottetown for use over the narrow gauge portion. As one standard car has the carrying capacity of two Island cars and the cost of carriage in both cases is the same, not only would traffic be facilitated but there would be a substantial saving.

There is a surplus of locomotives, smaller than are generally used on the mainland, but which are large enough to move the traffic on the Prince Edward Island side. These could be transferred to the Island and no additional outlay be required for motive power on the standardized portion of the road.

The 65 miles have to be ballasted, supplied with ties in any case so the only additional expense would be the rails.

Dr. J. W. Robertson in his address to the people of the Island asked the farmers to increase the acreage by 75,000. Assuming the yield at twenty-five bushels per acre the total would be 1,875,000 bushels or 4,464 cars. If only half the objective is reached the additional transportation would have to be provided

for 2,232 cars.

It is a very grave question whether it is justifiable to urge increased production unless there is adequate transportation. The standardization of at least 65 miles is a sound, economic proposition. The saving effected in the handling of freight, the reduced cost of carriage and the increased traffic together with the practical elimination of snow fighting would furnish ample returns on the capital expenditure.

\$1,000,000 FOR QUEBEC ROADS.

Hon. Auguste Tessier, provincial minister of roads, stated at Quebec, on Wednesday, that the \$1,000,000 voted by the Government for the good roads will be used as follows:

One hundred and fifty thousand dollars will be spent for the Montreal-Quebec road; \$131,000 for the Three Rivers-Grande Mere road; \$22,000 for the Edward VII. boulevard; \$11,000 to repair the Sherbrooke-Derby line, and \$4,000 for the Chambly road. Seven hundred thousand dollars will be used for the amelioration of roads in different municipalities.

CANADA'S TRADE WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

Trade Figures Jump from \$57,021,81 in 1915 to \$102,139,723 in 1917.

Mr. Harrison Watson, Canadian Trade Commissioner in London, England, has forwarded a report on Great Britain's trade with the overseas Dominions. With the exception of British India, Canada heads the list. The trade between Canada and Great Britain has increased nearly 100 per cent. in two years, from \$57,021,481 to \$102,139,000.

As upon former occasions, the figures relating to the principal countries have been selected and reproduced in the table which follows, together with the corresponding statistics for the two previous years.

In making comparisons, it must be borne in mind that prices have steadily increased through the whole period—it being computed that wholesale prices in 1917 were roughly about 30 per cent. higher than in 1916, and that in the case of certain countries the position is still further disturbed by the fact that from July, 1917, import figures contain Government purchases which were not previously included.

It is to be assumed that this feature influences to some extent the imports from the United States and certain other countries which have been furnishing war materials to a considerable degree.

Table showing trade of the United Kingdom, i.e., imports, exports (the produce of the United Kingdom) and re-exports (the produce of foreign countries, and other portions of the British Empire)—with the countries indicated:—

	1915.	1916.	1917.
Canada—			
Imports ..	£40,988,851	£58,529,194	£84,330,854
Exports ..	13,292,713	18,018,249	16,210,272
Re-exports ..	2,739,917	3,564,759	1,598,597
Total ..	£57,021,481	£80,112,200	£102,139,723
Australia—			
Imports ..	£45,190,148	£36,178,135	£64,429,843
Exports ..	28,965,698	35,947,166	22,118,535
Re-exports ..	2,902,628	3,184,388	1,898,725
Total ..	£77,058,474	£75,209,689	£88,447,103
Union of South Africa—			
Imports ..	£11,043,936	£12,132,381	£11,433,328
Exports ..	10,291,308	21,078,316	23,110,860
Re-exports ..	1,563,580	1,705,858	1,674,474
Total ..	£22,898,824	£34,916,555	£36,218,662
British West Indies—			
Imports ..	£4,074,142	£5,017,771	£6,250,571
Exports ..	1,837,185	2,138,931	2,060,360
Re-exports ..	400,034	340,463	150,823
Total ..	£6,311,361	£7,497,165	£8,461,754
British India—			
Imports ..	£62,213,614	£72,366,184	£66,847,227
Exports ..	45,603,792	52,787,920	59,961,671
Re-exports ..	1,295,410	1,577,234	750,207
Total ..	£109,112,816	£126,731,338	£127,559,075

MUST PAY COAL PRICES.

Dispute in U. S. Between Fuel and Railroad Administrations is Straightened Out.

Washington, April 18.

Railroads hereafter will purchase their coal at the full market price, and cars will be evenly distributed at all mines, under an arrangement reached by the Railroad and Fuel Administrations. The plan was accepted after President Wilson intervened to settle differences between Fuel Administrator Garfield and John Skelton Williams, director of purchases for the Railroad Administration.

The Fuel Administration objected to sales of coal to railroads at prices less than those charged other consumers, and to the system whereby railroads gave a 100 per cent. car supply to mines supplying coal for railroad use, while other mines suffered from car shortage. One effect of the arrangement, it was pointed out to-day, will be that all consumers will share alike in coal distribution.

The Fuel Administration will begin immediately to work out plans for supplying the railroads with fuel and for apportioning their orders in a way to relieve mines in congested territory.

Successful operation of such a system, in the opinion of officials, will serve to allay the labor unrest arising through continued idleness of some mines, and put an end to an exodus of mine workers which has reached alarming proportions. Equalization of orders at the mines, it is declared, will serve the purpose of materially increasing the volume of coal produced, and will stabilize manufacturing conditions which have been disturbed by the fuel shortage.

NEW HAVEN'S EARNINGS.

Total operating revenues of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company for 1917 aggregated \$85,784,893, the largest in the history of the road, according to the annual report issued to-day. This represents a gain of 6.24 per cent. over the previous year.

This increase was offset, however, by an expansion of \$7,598,031 in operating expenses, leaving a decrease of \$2,245,305 in net returns. Taxes and other charges increased this item to \$2,577,431.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

Change in Train Schedules

Will be made

SUNDAY, APRIL 28TH, 1918.

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