



The Ice Boats that carry mail and passengers between Cape Traverse, P.E.I., and Cape Tormentine, N.B., a distance of seven miles. Mails were carried by these boats throughout February, 1909.

ten millions and to put up any required security for the fulfilment of the contract.

Half the existing railway tunnels have been built for a million dollars per mile or less, and the breadth of the straits at the narrowest part where the Island tunnel will be placed is but seven miles. It is true that Mr. St. Laurent, C.E., in his report submitted to Parliament in 1907, estimated the cost of the Island Tunnel at something over \$15,000,000, but he reached this conclusion by adding a cast iron lining, to cost by his own estimate \$7,392,000, or nearly half the total cost of the work! Sir Douglas Fox is of opinion that in a firm rock formation such as exists in this locality the ordinary brick and cement lining would be all that is required.

Next in importance to the question of cost is the question of what the Tunnel would save by superseding existing services and what it would earn. It would release the winter steamers for use elsewhere, or for sale, and thus get rid of the interest on their cost, say \$30,000. It would also save the annual depreciation on these steamers, which in their arduous service may be set down at 10 per cent., or \$100,000. A steamer may be lost any day in the winter service, and although no such total loss has yet occurred, it has several times been narrowly averted. The service is extra-hazardous and no marine insurance company would take the risk at less than 10 per cent. The government does not insure, but the risk is there and for the five winter months may be set down at \$41,666.

Judging from past experience the annual cost of operating three steamers, over and above the receipts would be \$150,000. The *Stanley* and *Minto* in 1906 cost to operate \$109,000 over their receipts. The Tunnel would further save the cost of the following services now paid by the Dominion, at a yearly cost, as follows:—Steamship mail subsidy, \$12,500; telegraph cable subsidy, \$7,000; ice-boat service at the Capes, say \$6,000; special mail trains to connect with the winter steamers, say \$5,000.

These items of saving amount to \$350,000 or \$50,000 in excess of the interest cost of 3 per cent. on ten millions, the assumed cost of the Tunnel. But the largest item of saving has yet to be considered—the annual damage claim of the Island for the non-fulfilment of the terms of union, which must be met and cannot be evaded. The Dominion has confessed to its default and paid for it down to 1901, when it placed a million dollars to the Island's credit for damage to that date, after refusing to arbitrate the claim. This claim is now mounting high again.

Thus the savings which the Tunnel would effect would run well up to the half million mark. We must add thereto what it would earn as the sole railway outlet of a rich and fertile Province and the connecting link between a government railway system of 260 miles on the Island and 1,500 miles on the mainland. A toll of one cent per bushel on half the Island's crop of oats and potatoes this year would alone amount to \$75,000. It is a moderate estimate

that in addition to its direct earnings the Tunnel would add to the receipts of the two railway systems it would connect by \$100,000 to \$150,000 a year. There is good reason to hope that it would prove the best paying public work the Dominion would possess.

So we build up our case. The Tunnel is a necessity. We are abundantly entitled to it. The Dominion is in honour and duty bound to build it, and it would save and earn so much as to be an entirely self-supporting work, that would not cost the federal tax-payer a cent.

Moreover, the deliverances of eminent Canadian and imperial statesmen on the subject tend to strengthen the Island's claims for the Tunnel. Thus so long ago as 1886 Earl Grenville, the Colonial Secretary, in a strongly worded despatch to Lord Lansdowne, the Governor-General of Canada, reminded the Canadian Government that if steamers could not fulfil the stipulated service the all-rail line beneath the Straits ought to be seriously considered. He went on to speak of the great advantages to both the Dominion and the Province which would result, together with "the large direct and indirect return for the expenditure," and added:

"It would reflect great credit upon the Dominion Government, if after connecting British Columbia with the eastern Provinces by the Canadian Pacific Railway, it should now be able to complete that system of railway communication by an extension to Prince Edward Island."

Sir John Macdonald on the eve of the election in 1891, the last in which he engaged and near the close of his great career, wrote the late Senator Howland, in part, as follows: "I fully appreciate the nature and the extent of the obligation incurred by the Dominion to maintain continuous communication between the Island and the mainland. We have tried to carry this out by the *Stanley*, but, of course, she cannot fight against the elements. So if the cost comes within a reasonable amount such as Parliament feels itself justified in incurring, I shall be prepared to submit the question (of the Tunnel) for their favourable consideration."

In the same month Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, then leader of the Opposition, wrote his oft-quoted letter to the editor of the *Charlottetown Guardian*, in which he said the Tunnel "must be constructed if found to be at all reasonably practicable." That was seventeen years ago and yet after more than twelve years in power nothing has been done by him to implement the conditional promise.

The question has been before our people very much of late. Here in Charlottetown, Hon. Mr. Foster, Hon. Mr. Fielding, and Mr. R. L. Borden have all made deliverances in regard to it. Mr. Foster expressed his belief in the practicability of the work, that it could be built for ten millions, that it would pay interest on the cost and that it is the duty of Canada to undertake the work. Mr. Fielding expressed doubts as to the cost, and said the Government had not sufficient information, but add-

ed that if the work could be done for ten millions, or even a considerably larger sum, he would be personally prepared to support it. Mr. Borden also favoured the work if reasonably practicable and deemed it the duty of whatever government might be in power to at once procure full information by surveys, borings and engineering estimates, that the work might be proceeded with if found to be practicable at reasonable cost.

All the federal candidates in the late election were "Tunnel men" and in the Provincial campaign now nearing its close both parties have made the Tunnel a prominent plank in their platforms.

There are a few other points of view which may be briefly presented. The Tunnel, like another isthmus, at right angles with the isthmus of Chignecto which joins New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, would bind the three Maritime Provinces together by bands of steel. It would give a great impetus to inter-provincial trade. It would render possible the immediate political union of the three Provinces in one—a union impossible without such means of inter-communication.

Here, it is felt and believed that Canada has treated our people unjustly and meanly, has failed to keep faith, and has made the union an untoward event so far as the Island is concerned. Discontent, loss of population, with loss of representation at Ottawa, by the Maritime Provinces, must be regretted by all patriotic Canadians. The Island has suffered greatly in these respects.

Discontent and dwarfed growth in the maritime section of the Dominion has sounded abroad to the United States and to Newfoundland. All hope of bringing the Ancient Colony into the union with Canada must be abandoned, till the Maritime Provinces have regained their old-time rapid growth in population, trade and wealth, and especially until the great disabilities and grievances of Prince Edward Island are removed. The reason is not far to seek for the fact that the greatest reproach that can be put upon a public man in Newfoundland is that he favours union with Canada.

Those who have intelligently considered the question will, I think, agree with me that there is no public work which Canada can undertake which at equal cost would produce so many beneficial results as the construction of the Tunnel. It would complete the real work of union. It would be an act of justice, long delayed. It would restore the lost faith of a Province in sister Provinces. It would remove a long-standing grievance and great disabilities otherwise irremovable. It would be a work of great advantage not alone to the Island and the other Maritime Provinces, but to the Dominion at large in both a patriotic and a commercial sense. If, as I and many others believe, all this can be accomplished without adding a single dollar to the burdens of the people of Canada, why should it not be undertaken?

J. E. B. McCREADY.

Charlottetown, November 11, 1908.