

First Narrows Bridge

CANADA SHIPPING ACT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. THOMAS REID (New Westminster): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Marine (Mr. Duranleau). Is the shipping bill, as passed last session, in effect in Canada, and if not would the minister be good enough to make a short statement why it has not been proclaimed?

Hon. ALFRED DURANLEAU (Minister of Marine): The query of my hon. friend will be taken as a notice of question, and I shall give an answer within two or three days.

FIRST NARROWS BRIDGE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. E. MUNN (Vancouver North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works if, after some delay, they have yet arrived at a conclusion in regard to the application respecting the First Narrows bridge?

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): I will answer that question, Mr. Speaker, because it is not a matter affecting the Department of Public Works; it is a matter affecting the Department of External Affairs.

The First Narrows bridge, as I explained last year, is to cross the entrance to the harbour of Vancouver. The harbour of Vancouver has been constructed, and the facilities made available, largely at the expense of the taxpayers of Canada. It is a national port, the only port of consequence upon the Pacific coast able to take care of large traffic. The port of Prince Rupert has not been available for traffic to the extent that was originally thought, and Vancouver cares for most of the traffic on the Pacific slope. The ratepayers of North Vancouver, which is the name of the territory on the north side of the fairway or entrance to Vancouver harbour have approved of the construction of this bridge—

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): And those of Vancouver too.

Mr. BENNETT: The ratepayers of Vancouver city proper, on the south side of the fairway or entrance, have also approved. The whole area may be called Greater Vancouver.

The proposals contemplate a wire suspension bridge. The only question that this government has to consider is whether or not in the public interest it shall agree to the plans. It has no concern with respect to the arrange-

[Mr. Manion.]

ments made by the private interests who are promoting the undertaking, nor with the attitude of the communities with respect to its construction. But all Canada is vitally interested in the facilities at the port of Vancouver. The fairway or entrance to the harbour there is narrow, and it is impossible to make it much wider, for on the south side is Stanley park, and on the north side you have the solid foundation of the territory called North Vancouver. It follows therefore that the only question was how far north the pier should be constructed to which the suspension bridge is to be attached on the north side. The government requested the private interests promoting this enterprise to satisfy them that the pier could not be constructed any farther north than was proposed. For if it were not as far north as was physically possible, having regard to the surrounding territory, it followed that the fairway could not be widened, as no dredging could take place between the pier and the north shore. The question is purely one of the public interest. We were not unaware of the great responsibility that attaches to approving of a scheme that would render it impossible for seventy-five years to widen the fairway at the entrance to Vancouver harbour. Recently it has been indicated to the government that the north pier might possibly be constructed fifty feet or more farther north, and that owing to the physical conditions that exist on the southern side, that is in Stanley park, the pier there might be erected a little farther north, with the result that the fairway might be slightly widened. The matter is still under consideration, but I think the hon. gentleman for bringing it to the attention of the house. It is in no sense a matter of public works or marine and fisheries or anything of the sort, it is a matter of the welfare of the whole of western Canada, and in part of eastern Canada also, and we are fearful lest any mistake be made that would limit the usefulness of Vancouver harbour by lessening the possibility of making a very narrow fairway as wide as possible, to serve the commerce of the world.

HALIFAX-DARTMOUTH BRIDGE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. WILLIAM DUFF (Antigonish-Guysborough): May I ask the Prime Minister what the position is as to his promise of 1930 in regard to a bridge from Halifax to Dartmouth?