

*The Budget—Mr. H. J. Murphy*

waters to the trading points of the bay of Fundy and New England for the products of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. It would increase coastwise shipping between the ports on the gulf of St. Lawrence, the bay of Chaleur, Northumberland strait and then on the bay of Fundy. It would increase regular steamship sailings between the Atlantic provinces and central Canada. At this point I might mention that in the railway committee we were told that a steamship will ply shortly between Nova Scotia and Bar Harbor, Maine, showing that the days of coastwise shipping have really just begun in eastern Canada and are not at an end. A Chignecto canal would make it convenient for vessels plying between Montreal and points on the Atlantic seaboard to call at ports, not only in the bay of Fundy but in northern Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and northern New Brunswick to load or discharge cargo in passing.

It would revive native industries which flourished years ago but which could not survive the pressure of ever-increasing rail charges; it would stimulate the establishment of new industries; it would create a new economy in the Atlantic provinces.

It may surprise many residents of Canada to know that four years after confederation the percentage of population employed in industry in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was almost equal to the percentage of population similarly employed in Quebec and Ontario. Seventy-five years later, however, there had been a tremendous change. Ontario and Quebec had been steadily enriched, and their industrial employment average rose. In the three Atlantic provinces there had not been an increase, but a devastating decline. Incidentally, New Brunswick in that period had dropped from first place to second place from the last among the five provinces. Prior to confederation the maritime provinces were regarded as the most prosperous region in British North America. New Brunswick on a per capita basis was the most industrialized of any of the provinces then comprising Canada. The lack of the Chignecto canal is one reason why our prosperity and industrial developments have lagged far behind Quebec and Ontario.

In 1871, of every five Canadian industrial workers one was employed in the maritimes. In 1946 the ratio had dropped to one out of every seventeen. Again, in 1871 the industrial wages paid per inhabitant in New Brunswick were the highest of any of the provinces. In 1946 that province ranked second last in wages.

[Mr. Murphy (Westmorland).]

The extent to which the failure to build the Chignecto canal has arrested maritime development is difficult to estimate. That failure, together with the distress which overwhelmed the seaboard provinces during the depression of the 1870's, were marked factors in retarding our progress. Previously prosperous communities declined in the years following confederation. Industries decayed and our youth, denied opportunities at home, migrated because of the compulsion of economic necessity. The beneficiaries from these involuntary migrations are the other parts of Canada and the New England states.

The industrial design of the Atlantic provinces has been the darkest shadow in the history of confederation and the people of that region have come to the conclusion that one of the most productive remedies, a remedy which would confer lasting benefit, is the construction of the Chignecto canal. The volume of traffic now passing through our Canadian canals far exceeds the expectations of those men who had the faith, foresight and courage to embark on the policy of canal construction. The failure of those men of faith, foresight and courage to include the construction of the Chignecto canal is the failure that we must rectify.

The history of the canal project began more than 260 years ago in the days of the first Acadian settlement in the maritimes. The intendant saw the advantage of serving the isthmus, and his suggestion of how to go about it was quite simple. He suggested that a way be cleared across the flats and thus allow the 47-foot high tides of the bay of Fundy to do the rest. The intendant was not an engineer but his vision of the need, even in those far-off days, was sound.

Actually it was not until 1822 that the first practical step was taken. A survey for the canal was made in that year, and it was followed by others. The most competent engineers of that day agreed that the surveys showed the project to be both feasible and desirable. In the pre-confederation negotiations of 1864 and 1866 the Chignecto canal was repeatedly discussed by delegates. I will show later that this construction was actually promised as an inducement to the maritime provinces to enter confederation.

The first parliament of Canada quickly got down to business on the canal project when, in 1868, it ordered the reports of all surveys referred to the then minister of public works for study. When this was done hopes of early action ran high. Departmental officials who examined the engineering and other data for the minister were so decisive in their recom-