

facilities were developed upon such a scale as to afford additional facilities beyond our present need, for the proper and thorough handling of a large and growing import and export business; second, to make all port facilities eventually available to all lines of railway upon an equitable and fair basis; third, to own, control and operate all harbour-front railways and pier accommodation. Those policies clearly laid down the principles at which we aimed.

In connection with the first, which was to provide additional facilities, we had before us the report of the so-called Duncan Commission; and I might explain that the fact that the harbour had not been developed up to 1895 or 1896 caused a great deal of disappointment and unrest, and that was one of the reasons which brought about that well known saying, "Maritime Rights," following which the Duncan Commission was appointed. I should like to place on Hansard, if I may, an extract from the report of Sir Andrew Rae Duncan, because it may be a guide in future when other money will probably be required in connection with the port of Saint John:

We are satisfied that neither at Halifax nor at Saint John—although developments at Saint John have been more extensive than at Halifax—is it possible, in present circumstances, to secure adequate port development. We recommend that, in respect of each of these two harbours, the Federal Government should establish a statutory Harbour Commission, whose business it would be to see that the port facilities are developed on such a scale as will gradually—but by no means slowly—create channels through which trade can expand both winter and summer. The development of a port is as much a matter of mechanical and technical equipment, business organization and practical administration, as is the development of any extensive manufacturing or industrial business.

We believe it is in the public interest of Canada, and in the interest of the future growth and expansion of its activities, that its Atlantic ports should be developed, just as it has been that its railways and canals should be developed—though development of these has naturally come first. We believe also from the evidence we have had that, under existing conditions of proprietorship at these ports, there will neither be inducement enough, nor impetus enough, to create really great ports, since for some time, at all events, it will be necessary to create facilities even ahead of expansion of trade. All that the Fathers of Confederation said about the importance to Canada of outlets and inlets on the Atlantic ocean open all the year round is as true to-day as it was then (and is indeed, from a commercial point of view, more immediately true now than then), and, in respect to ports—as well as in respect to the railways—the experience of the late war is fresh enough in mind to illustrate one phase of the national viewpoint and national necessity.

I may say, honourable gentlemen, that that was the guide which we had in framing the policy of laying out a comprehensive plan of development which would allow of future expansion.

At the present moment, I understand, there is in Canada a very eminent engineer, Sir Alexander Gibb, who is making an examination of Canadian ports, and it may be that such an eminent engineer will not agree with what we did in the early stages of the Harbour Commission. I do not want to say that he will disagree, but sometimes engineers, like lawyers, differ in opinion. After having our plans prepared we consulted the Shipping Federation of Canada, in Montreal, as to the location of the facilities. We consulted shipping men generally, captains and navigators in the harbour of Saint John, as to the placement of the wharves. We also consulted the railway officials, and we received approval of the plans from the Department of Marine and Fisheries. As I have said, I do not anticipate any criticism as to the placing of those structures, but I would put on record the fact that we did consult those people who, as we thought, had intimate knowledge of the requirements of the port, and the proper position for those facilities.

I wish also to say that we found, by statistics we had gathered, that a great deal of delay had taken place in former years with regard to ships entering the port of Saint John. Those statistics showed that in one year sixty steamers had been delayed in securing accommodation at our port, and this demonstrated the necessity of providing facilities on an increased scale. For that reason alone I am sure the people of this country generally will commend this application.

I notice by the provisions of this Bill that it is in the nature of a loan. As I have said, I understand it is intended to provide \$5,000,000 for reclaiming the burnt-over area, and \$5,000,000 for carrying on work which had been previously planned. I had hoped that the Government might see its way to provide at least a portion of this money, not by way of loan to the Harbour Commission, but by way of a separate vote or grant. I based that hope upon the fact that under the present Bill the Harbour Commission of Saint John is charged with interest upon a certain proportion of those facilities which have been destroyed, and to add a further interest charge on the amount necessary to restore those is placing rather a handicap upon the Harbour Commission. Frankly I must say, from experience, that I do not see how it will be possible for the Harbour Commission