

THE CENTRAL RAILWAY SWALLOWED UP ABOUT \$1,260,000 OF PUBLIC FUNDS

oad, which is still far from Gibson, has had a startling financial history during last few years--How the Government has Fed it With Public Money--Mr. Hill's Prophecy.

For the purpose of reminding the people of New Brunswick of the salient facts concerning the Central Railway, which has eaten up \$1,260,000 of public funds though it still is many miles away from its proper terminus, Gibson, The Telegraph requested J. D. Hazen, M. P. P. to give a summary of the history of the enterprise. No elector who desires to vote intelligently can do so unless he has read Mr. Hazen's statement carefully. It follows here:

The Central Railway extending from Norton to Chipman was constructed many years ago. It is 16 miles in length and received the following sums in subsidies:

Table with 2 columns: Source of funds, Amount. From the Dominion: \$100,000. From the Province: \$120,000. Total: \$220,000.

This road only extended to Chipman and did not reach the coal areas in Northfield and Canning, and at the session of the legislature in 1901, Mr. Tweedie, on behalf of the government, introduced a bill to provide for the development of the coal areas in the counties of Queens and Suburby.

The bill empowered the act empowered the government to guarantee the principal and interest on first mortgage bonds of any company authorized to construct a railway from Chipman in the county of Queens to Gibson in the county of York, to an amount not exceeding \$200,000.

The bill further provided that the bonds, or any portion of them, should not be guaranteed until the railway had been fully constructed and in running order, provided with sufficient rolling stock and certified to be so by an inspector to be appointed by the lieutenant-governor-in-council.

It also provided that the company should bind itself to establish on the line of railway a plant for mining coal to the satisfaction of the lieutenant-governor-in-council and capable of mining an average of not less than 500 tons a day, and that such plant should be in operation before the bonds should be guaranteed.

At the same session of the legislature a company composed of Ernest Hutchison, E. Byron Winslow, Charles A. C. Bruce, Franklin Stinson, Willard Kitchin, under P. Barnhill and Robert A. Irving was incorporated under the name of The New Brunswick Coal & Railway Company, with powers to construct a line of railway from Chipman to Gibson and to carry on the business of mining coal and other minerals.

The work of constructing the road from Chipman towards Fredericton was entered upon, but up to the present time none of the gentlemen named as incorporators, or any members of the New Brunswick Coal & Railway Company, have, it is understood, put any money into the enterprise and the work that has been done has been entirely done with public money.

In addition to the guarantee of \$200,000 the road was guaranteed by the province a subsidy of \$250,000 a mile, and the ordinary subsidy from the dominion government of \$3,000.

In introducing the bill authorizing the issue of bonds, Mr. Tweedie pointed out that the interests of the province were well safeguarded because the road would be built to the satisfaction of the lieutenant-governor-in-council, and it was felt that it was of great importance to have the outlet at Fredericton, as the distance from the mines was much shorter to Fredericton than to St. John, and the coal could be placed on the market there at more advantage than at the latter place.

A great deal was also expected from the fact that at Fredericton the road would connect with the Canadian Pacific railway, and there was a provision in the act authorizing the lieutenant-governor-in-council to impose a tax upon all railway companies in the province, not exceeding three per cent. of the gross earnings made within the province each year, and not exceeding in any year an amount which in the opinion of the lieutenant-governor-in-council, be equivalent to fifteen cents per ton upon all coal used by such companies and on a statement of such tax might be allowed on all New Brunswick coal used by such railway company.

Work on the road was proceeded with, but slowly, and in the year 1903 the government introduced an act, which authorized the lieutenant-governor-in-council to guarantee bonds upon the line of railway from Norton to Gibson, to the amount of \$200,000, to enable the New Brunswick Coal & Railway Company to purchase the Central railway, running from Norton to Chipman, which it was stated could be purchased for the sum of \$130,000, and the remainder would be for money expended in rebuilding bridges on the Central railway and making other necessary improvements.

This measure was strongly opposed in the House by the opposition and by others. Mr. Hill, a government supporter, in speaking with reference to it said: "As I said, I hoped this road on the railway would be a great success, but I had confidence in the premier (Mr. Tweedie), in his financial conservatism, and that he would not allow the government to introduce an act which would lead to disaster to the province; but that confidence has been shaken and I am afraid he is not the man I thought he was. Indeed I regret to state that I believe he has fallen into the hands of the attorney-general (Mr. Pugsley). I am afraid that the cheerful optimism and generosity of the attorney-general would lead him to build castles in Spain and railways anywhere, and it looks very much as if he had converted the conservative premier to his way of thinking. I believe this is a black letter day in the history of the province, because it will lead the province in a great deal of debt and deterioration from the value of private property. Roads will be built, and the province will be ruined."

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difficult, schools will be affected and people will be induced to leave the province because of it having become a more expensive place to live in. The policy of guaranteeing the bonds of a railway is a new departure and before it is put into effect the people should be notified. I am satisfied that three-fourths of the people of the province, if they knew the provisions of the bill, would be strongly opposed to it, and I venture to say that the government dare not dissolve the House on this measure and appeal to the people."

Hon. Mr. Pugsley--"You don't like to run elections." Hon. Mr. Hill--"If you desire I will resign and run again on this issue."

Hon. Mr. Pugsley--"We are never afraid to appeal to the people." Hon. Mr. Hill--"No, four or five years from now you and the Premier will probably be safe in other positions and there will be no one upon whom the electors can wreak their just vengeance."

Mr. Hill seems in view of recent events to have been a true prophet. Mr. Hazen speaking about the matter, said: "With regard to the Central road, nothing can be more unjustifiable than the province to engage in the work of guaranteeing bonds. How is it possible to justify such a proposal as that contained in the bill, to guarantee bonds to the extent of \$200,000 for a railway that has never paid expenses? This road has already received from the dominion and provincial governments subsidies to the extent of \$291,000, and for some time past it has been a menace to life and limb. If we guarantee the bonds of this line there will be demanded to do the same for the Canada Eastern, for the Shore Line and for other railways; we will be establishing a precedent that will make it clear to the public that we shall be adding practically \$1,000,000 to the debt of the country--\$800,000 for the Restigouche & Western, \$200,000 for the Central, \$100,000 for the Beauséjour and \$25,000 a mile, or \$225,000 in all as a subsidy to the 90 miles of the Restigouche & Western which is still uncompleted, and \$400,000 for the purpose of buying rolling stock."

Up to this time it will be seen that \$450,000 of bonds had been guaranteed. In the following session, 1904, a bill was introduced to amend the act of 1901. This bill provided that the government could guarantee the bonds for that portion of the road between Chipman and Gibson, according to progress estimates, as the work proceeded, thus obviating the necessity of having the road completed from Chipman to Gibson before the bonds were guaranteed.

During the debate in this matter Mr. Hazen stated that it appeared although only fifteen miles of the road had been built, many of the bonds had been issued, so that there would be no funds with which to complete the road through to Gibson; he doubted if the members of the company and there was no certainty that the road would ever be completed.

Hon. Mr. Pugsley, in reply, said that there was no doubt the road would be built to Gibson, as by doing so the government would be reducing from \$170 a ton to 30 cents a ton.

In the following session of 1905 the government came down to the legislature with a bill which practically took the management of the railway out of the control of the company and placed it in the hands of the government of the province, to be managed through two commissioners who were subsequently appointed, namely, Senator King and Mr. George McAvity. This is the first instance in the history of New Brunswick of the province entering upon the work of railway management. The bill made the province responsible for all expenses of the road and for its management, and provided that for the purpose of providing money to carry on the work that the lieutenant-governor-in-council was authorized to issue debentures to the amount of \$200,000 to be guaranteed by the lieutenant-governor-in-council.

There was a very lengthy debate over this in the legislature. The bill was strongly opposed by the opposition and by Mr. Hill. It was pointed out that when the last guarantee of \$200,000 was asked for, the house and country were assured that the province would not be called upon to contribute one dollar more to the enterprise.

In answer to this the attorney-general said that this would be the last time that anything would be asked, that if the legislation did not pass the railway would come to grief and the province would lose what money it had invested in it; but that he could assure the house that if this guarantee was authorized by the legislature no further assistance would be asked for, the road would be self-sustaining and the interest on the bonds guaranteed would be more than paid for out of its surplus.

The leader of the opposition, referring to the sum which the road had cost and showing that up to that time a total of \$1,170,000 of public money had been put into the railway and that the house was now asked to pledge the credit of the province for a further road upon the treasury, said that the proposition was the most astonishing one ever submitted to the legislature. He said: "When we look at that short piece of road and see what it has already cost the province it is not monstrous to ask further guarantee of a quarter of a million should even be suggested? It only confirmed," he said, "what was said by the honorable member from Charlotte: 'I regret to state that I believe he has fallen into the hands of the attorney-general (Mr. Pugsley). I am afraid that the cheerful optimism and generosity of the attorney-general would lead him to build castles in Spain and railways anywhere, and it looks very much as if he had converted the conservative premier to his way of thinking. I believe this is a black letter day in the history of the province, because it will lead the province in a great deal of debt and deterioration from the value of private property. Roads will be built, and the province will be ruined.'"

Very dry indeed is a complaint, isn't it? Why don't you take a few drops of Nervine occasionally and get cured--it never fails. Polson's is the perfect remedy for all ailments of the stomach and bowels. It is a sure cure for indigestion, flatulence, and all other ailments of the digestive system. Permanent cure guaranteed.

election which was then expected. Seven months passed since Mr. Pugsley made his statement and the road has not yet been taken by the Grand Trunk Pacific. As everyone knows who is familiar with the Grand Trunk Pacific, it is not surprising that nothing making it obligatory upon the company to seek a short entrance into the city of St. John, Quebec and Montreal from the two points mentioned in the act and the company will be fulfilling its charter if it runs to Montreal. If, however, the company would desire to build a line from St. John to Montreal, it would be necessary to rebuild from beginning to end with new bridges and heavier rails and the company purchasing it would be acquiring a little if any more value to it than the right of way.

A great effort has been made to create the impression in the country that the road has become a paying property and the commissioners in the statement which they laid before the House last year claimed a surplus of a few hundred dollars on the year's operations. This surplus, however, was fictitious, and the road was charged up against the road, and in addition to that, sums which should have been charged against the road, were charged against the road, and the public works department and paid by the province, and if there had been properly charged the road would have been paid upon the bonds.

There has never been any investigation into the way the sums of public money in connection with this road have been expended. The effort of the opposition to obtain an investigation was defeated by the government majority in the House, and although at the last session of the public accounts committee opposition was made to the accounts of the Central railway should be laid before the committee, the House adjourned without this having been done.

At the motion to go into committee on the bill, Mr. Hazen moved the following amendment: "That the speaker do now leave the chair, but in the opinion of this House it is desirable that before bill No. 109 is referred to the committee of the whole House that all facts in connection with the management and expenditure of public money made in connection with the New Brunswick Coal & Railway Company be inquired into and ascertained, and for that purpose that a royal commission be appointed to inquire into the same, and to report to the House not later than the first week of the next session of the legislature."

This amendment was voted down on a straight party division, with the exception that Mr. Hill voted with the opposition, and the bill was passed by a majority of the extent of \$250,000 was granted. Up to this time, then, we have the following amounts paid or guaranteed by the province on account of this road, since 1901:

Table with 2 columns: Year, Amount. First guarantee, 1891: \$200,000. Second guarantee, 1903: \$250,000. Third guarantee, 1905: \$250,000. Total: \$700,000.

In the session of 1907, in spite of the solemn assurance made to the house in 1905 to the effect that no further aid would be asked for this road, a bill was introduced to guarantee bonds to the extent of \$1,000,000 of which, it was explained, was for the purpose of paying interest on the bonds, and the other \$400,000 for the purpose of buying rolling stock.

In speaking to this resolution, Mr. Hazen said: "The last time an issue of bonds was asked on account of this railway we were assured that the road would be self-sustaining and that the interest on the bonds would be paid by the road itself. It is now proposed to issue bonds to the extent of \$1,000,000, and it is not clear how the road is to be self-sustaining. It is not clear how the road is to be self-sustaining. It is not clear how the road is to be self-sustaining."

Up to the present time, since 1901, the province has guaranteed to the Central Railway for the following sums:

Table with 2 columns: Year, Amount. First issue of bonds, 1901: \$200,000. Second issue of bonds, 1903: \$250,000. Third issue of bonds, 1905: \$250,000. Fourth issue of bonds, 1907: \$1,000,000. Subsidies paid by province, say: \$0,000. Total: \$1,700,000.

In addition to this the company also received from the dominion government subsidies on the road to the amount of \$291,000, and for some time past it has been a menace to life and limb. If we guarantee the bonds of this line there will be demanded to do the same for the Canada Eastern, for the Shore Line and for other railways; we will be establishing a precedent that will make it clear to the public that we shall be adding practically \$1,000,000 to the debt of the country--\$800,000 for the Restigouche & Western, \$200,000 for the Central, \$100,000 for the Beauséjour and \$25,000 a mile, or \$225,000 in all as a subsidy to the 90 miles of the Restigouche & Western which is still uncompleted, and \$400,000 for the purpose of buying rolling stock."

The original design of the road being extended to Gibson has not been carried out, and it was admitted by the premier in the last session of the House that it would not be carried out and that there was no money available for the purpose. Had the original design been carried out the road would have been completed long before this, a splendid market would have been opened up for the coal of the Grand Lake district, and the people living in Chipman, Newcastle Bridge and the other places in the vicinity would have had a big business. It is not surprising that the government has been so slow in carrying out the original design of the road.

The total amount of public funds from all sources spent, and for which the province and dominion have become liable, including the \$200,000 of subsidies on the old road from Chipman to Norton, amounts to the sum of \$1,260,000, as follows:

Table with 2 columns: Category, Amount. Guarantee of bonds and provincial subsidy: \$700,000. Dominion government subsidy: \$70,000. Subsidies paid on the construction of road from Norton to Chipman: \$290,000. Total: \$1,260,000.

This large sum of money is sufficient to have constructed a first-class road from beginning to end, equipped with modern rolling stock. The present road, however, has heavy grades and light rails, and none of the bridges are fit for a trunk line railway, and some of them are bridges that were taken off the Intercolonial railway because they were not strong enough for modern traffic.

The government has on several occasions endeavored to create the impression that the road would be ultimately acquired by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company and that by this means the obligation would be taken off the shoulders of the province; in fact, speaking in the legislature in the month of March last, Mr. Pugsley asserted that he had positive assurances that the road would be acquired by the Grand Trunk Pacific for a few months of the year. It is within three months of the time, when he was speaking.

This statement of Mr. Pugsley's was made, no doubt, in anticipation of a general election which was then expected. Seven months passed since Mr. Pugsley made his statement and the road has not yet been taken by the Grand Trunk Pacific. As everyone knows who is familiar with the Grand Trunk Pacific, it is not surprising that nothing making it obligatory upon the company to seek a short entrance into the city of St. John, Quebec and Montreal from the two points mentioned in the act and the company will be fulfilling its charter if it runs to Montreal. If, however, the company would desire to build a line from St. John to Montreal, it would be necessary to rebuild from beginning to end with new bridges and heavier rails and the company purchasing it would be acquiring a little if any more value to it than the right of way.

INSPECTION DAY ON THE CENTRAL

Commissioners Take Guests Over the \$1,260,000 Railway

PARTY HAS GOOD TIME DESPITE RAIN

Dodge a Washout on the Return Journey--Much Interest Taken in Inspection of Road and of the Coal Mines.

While pouring rain to some extent interfered with the trip to Chipman and Minto over the N. B. Coal & Railway Company's line, which some fifty guests of the commissioners, Senator King and George McAvity, made Tuesday, yet they were able to get a good view of the road and the coal mines at Minto have been a great future before them, and that the railway when completed to the coal mines at Minto will be a most useful factor in developing that section of the province.

Those in the Party. The following were the guests of the commissioners: Col. H. H. McLean, R. B. Kesson, M. Shalbot, George Robertson, M. P. P.; T. B. Blair, W. E. Foster, J. B. Cudlip, J. W. V. Lawlor, J. H. McRobbie, James Pender, Premier Robinson, Hon. G. J. Osmar, Dr. Peake (Simbury), Dr. J. M. Smith, D. J. Brown, Gilmore Brown, E. C. Elkin, A. W. Adams, L. R. Ross, Dr. J. W. Daniels, M. P. P.; J. B. Tweedie, M. P. P.; H. M. Hoppe, J. M. Robinson, Charles Nevins, F. B. Francis, W. C. Winslow, F. M. Tweedie, M. P. P.; T. M. Burns, M. P. P.; J. P. Knight, secretary of the Canadian Bankers' Association; S. H. White, H. P. Robinson, Dr. Keith (Moncton), Hon. J. D. Thompson, M. P. P.; Hon. L. H. Harris, W. B. Ferris, Hon. James Barnes, Superintendent Sherwood T. Hart, M. P. P.; T. M. Burns, M. P. P.; J. P. Knight, secretary of the Canadian Bankers' Association; S. H. White, H. P. Robinson, Dr. Keith (Moncton), Hon. J. D. Thompson, M. P. P.; Hon. L. H. Harris, W. B. Ferris, Hon. 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