

now be running from Dartmouth to Musquodoboit harbour. For a few weeks in the later months of last year a freight passenger service was in operation under some arrangements between the contractors and the Department of Railways and Canals. This service was operated by the contractors. I should say that the Government have not yet taken over the railway and it is still in the hands of the contractors. The country between Dartmouth and Musquodoboit is an old section, there is in that district a considerable population. If the road were in actual operation it would perform a valuable service for those people and it would be decidedly in the public interest to commence the operation of the road at the earliest date possible.

What I want particularly to urge upon the minister is that some working arrangement be made between the department and the contractors whereby a daily passenger and freight service may be put into operation between Dartmouth and Musquodoboit harbour or a point further east if possible. It would be a very great convenience to the people living in the district traversed by the road. The road not yet being in the hands of the Government but in that of the contractors, in order to secure a passenger and freight service at the present time it would be necessary for the department to enter into an operating contract with the contractors. I think it quite likely that the contractors would insist upon the payment of some amount for the performance of the service and I wish to submit that under all the circumstances the department would be justified in making such an expenditure. I do not think it would be very large but it would enable the contractors to carry on the service without loss to themselves and I hope with some little profit. I do not think that they would ask for more than a reasonable profit for the operation of the road.

There is just one other point that I would like to call to the attention of the minister. When this section of the road was in operation last fall, the contractors were obliged to stop their trains a mile or a mile and a half from the town of Dartmouth, owing to the fact that they were unable, or were not permitted, to enter into the town over the Intercolonial rails from the Acadia Sugar Refinery to Dartmouth ferry. I am not acquainted with the reasons for the refusal to permit the contractors to run their train directly into the town of Dartmouth. There possibly may have been good reasons for the refusal.

I would like to urge upon the minister that it would be well for him to enter into an arrangement with the contractors by which permission would be granted to them to run their trains as far as the Intercolonial station near the ferry wharf, which, as the minister knows, would be a very convenient point for receiving passengers and freight. I do not know that there is anything further that I can say upon the matter, except to assure the minister that if he can enter into such an arrangement with the contractors it will be a very great convenience to the section of the country interested, to the city of Halifax, and to other sections of Halifax county not directly contiguous to the railway. I would therefore urge the minister, as quickly as possible, to enter into negotiations with the contractors, and ascertain if he could make a reasonable working arrangement with them for the operation of this portion of the Halifax and Eastern railway.

Mr. COCHRANE: I discussed with the contractors the question of operation some weeks ago, and, in fact, we arranged for a temporary operation. They complained that there were some temporary bridges that they were afraid to run passenger trains over. The permanent bridges are under way now, and will be in place shortly. The question of running trains over the Intercolonial tracks into Dartmouth has also been taken up and will be arranged definitely. In reference to the other matter which the hon. gentleman has mentioned, I will take the matter up and see what can be done to secure the temporary operation of the road. I think it may go farther than the particular point that the hon. gentleman has mentioned; it may go to Country Harbour. I shall be very glad to take the matter up.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Before the minister leaves the question of branch lines in Eastern Nova Scotia, I would like to ask him if he has any information for the people of my constituency in regard to the proposed branch in that county. I understand that the minister made a survey of the road during the past season. He was kind enough to answer a question I asked a few days ago by saying that this matter was under consideration. I would like to know what his policy is in regard to the construction of the proposed branch line. Is it to build a line to the port of Country Harbour and also to the port of Guysborough, or has he any other scheme on hand in regard to it, and does he propose soon to take any action?