

In May last, two Members of the Government, Honourable A. J. White and Honourable William G. Fielding, visited Ottawa in connection with this business, and I am informed received from the Honourable Minister of Railways and Canals the most unqualified assurance that the Branch would be delivered to this Government so soon as arrangements for equipping the Eastern Extension and operating both roads should be completed.

The Government of Nova Scotia have since entered into contracts for the rolling stock required to equip the Pictou Branch, and will be prepared to take over both Railways on the 1st of October as formally notified to your Department by letter dated the 11th of August.

I trust, therefore, that your Department will recognize the necessity of giving prompt effect to the determination of the Government of Canada as expressed by the Honourable Minister of Railways, and that the postponement of the meeting of the Cabinet will not cause any delay in the delivery of the Branch when such delay would seriously prejudice the interests of the Province in a matter of the utmost importance concerning which the Government of Canada have been fully advised from time to time.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

ALBERT GAYTON, *Commissioner Public Works and Mines.*

Hon. J. H. POPE, Acting Minister Railways.

OTTAWA, 18th September, 1883.

SIR,—I am instructed to acknowledge the receipt of your communication, under date the 11th instant, having reference to the transfer of the Pictou Branch Railway to the Government of Nova Scotia.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A. P. BRADLEY, *Secretary.*

Hon. ALBERT GAYTON, Commissioner Public Works and Mines, Halifax, N.S.

DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS,

OTTAWA, 1st October, 1883.

SIR,—With reference to your letter of the 10th ultimo, urging on the Dominion Government the transfer of the Pictou Branch Railway to the Government of the Province of Nova Scotia, I have the honour, under instructions from the Acting Minister of this Department, to inform you that the whole question of proposed transfer in the legal bearing has been most carefully considered by his colleagues and himself, and that the conclusion to which they are compelled is that the special provision of the Act 42 Victoria, chapter 12, and of the agreement between the several parties concerned, dated 1st February, 1879, under which the transfer in question would be made, apply only under circumstances which are in no way similar to those at present existing.

It is therefore beyond the power of the Dominion Government to comply with the present request of the Government of the Province of Nova Scotia in relation to this matter.

I am, Sir, &c.,

A. P. BRADLEY, *Secretary.*

Commissioner of Public Works and Mines, Halifax.

THE COAL MINING ASSOCIATION OF PICTOU COUNTY,

STELLARTON, N. S., 2nd October, 1883.

SIR,—The petition of the undersigned, representing the coal interests of Pictou County, humbly sheweth :

That whereas it is currently reported that the Provincial Government, on obtaining possession of the Pictou Branch, are likely to increase the freight rates on coal over the Branch, and that such an increase would likely be to the detriment of the trade, and also of the Intercolonial Railway, in that, if an increased charge be