

I had to do with the matter while I was Minister of Railways and Canals. A copy of the resolution was likewise sent to the Minister of Public Works, who took a similar position, stating that the property was not required by the Public Works Department. That satisfied the Municipal Council.

However, an agitation was started by some people in Sydney against the Imperial Oil Company taking over this piece of property. The railway officials did not rush through with the deal. They hesitated before taking any action, and the matter was left in abeyance for about a year. The railway officials said to the Imperial Oil Company: "Go before the Council again and see whether they are still in favour of this piece of property being taken over by your Company." For the second time, about a year later, the Council by majority vote stood by the resolution, declaring that the town of Sydney was not affected by the Imperial Oil Company taking over the property.

But the railway officials went farther, in order, I suppose, to satisfy themselves in every possible way that the proposed transfer was not detrimental to the interest of the town of Sydney or to the public interest. Complaints were being made that the Marine Hospital and the park would be interfered with, and that the proximity of the oil plant would constitute a menace in case of fire. All these objections were placed before the Management of the Railway, and rightly so, by persons who wished to raise objection. Now, here is what was done in order that the railway officials might be sure that they were right as to the effect on the city of Sydney. In the first place, at the time the application was made, or shortly afterwards, the City Council passed a resolution in favour of the transfer. Then, after all the agitation by the persons who were opposed to the deal, the public were invited to attend the Council meetings, and again Council passed a resolution in favour of it. One would naturally think that the representatives of the city ought to know what the majority of the people thought about this matter. After all, I think everyone will admit that any proposal to locate a manufacturing industry near some person's property would always meet with some objection. It is almost impossible to avoid objection in locating such an industry. However, the City Council gave its decision. Then the City Engineer of Sydney was consulted and he approved. The matter was referred also to the Fire Chief of Sydney, and he approved of the proposal from the standpoint of safety. Then the question as

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to the Marine Hospital came in, and it was referred to the Superintendent of Public Health for the Province of Nova Scotia. He visited Sydney, and he had no objection to offer. Then they got the Provincial Fire Marshall for Nova Scotia and he also approved. I cannot see where the railway officials were lax in their duty. They took every precaution they could to see that the interests of the city of Sydney and of the Marine Hospital were protected. I do not see what further they could have done to get evidence that there was nothing in the complaints that had been made by, I suppose, a minority of the citizens of Sydney.

The matter did not again come before the Government of which I was a member, or before the Minister of Railways and Canals who succeeded me, the late Mr. Stewart. I suppose the Railway officials, after obtaining all possible information, had satisfied themselves that there could be no further complaints from any source. However, the matter finally came before the late Hon. William Kennedy, Minister of Railways and Canals in the present Government. Mr. Kennedy was making a trip down to the East, and decided to go on the ground himself. He visited the city of Sydney and went over the situation personally, right on the ground. It was after he came back that he signed the recommendation to Council and the Order was passed by the Government.

I have myself visited Sydney. I know the locations, and in my judgement, for what it is worth, no injustice has been done the city of Sydney in transferring this piece of property to the Imperial Oil Company. By the way, while I am on the subject, let me say that, although I have always been opposed to the late Mr. Kennedy, still I believe that there was no more upright and honourable man in the Dominion. I do not think that any action of his in connection with this matter was dishonest. And, as for the Imperial Oil Company, I believe the men who are connected with that concern and operating that plant are upright and honourable. They have been doing business in Sydney for many years and I cannot believe that they would take any unfair advantage or try to do an injustice or place their industry in such a position that it would be against the interest of Sydney as a whole.

Then the valuation comes in. The insinuation is that the Government that concluded this deal did not get a proper sum for the property. The valuation, as I understand, was based on an investigation made by the local valuator for the railways in Nova Scotia.