

APPENDIX

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS ON RESIGNATION OF HON. J. W. PICKERSGILL

September 5, 1967

The Rt. Hon. L. B. Pearson, M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada,
Ottawa, Ontario.
Dear Mike:

Some time ago, I discussed my possible retirement from public life with you and you were good enough to assure me that if I wished to be president of the Canadian Transport Commission when the time came to set it up, you would recommend my appointment.

As you are aware, the work preparatory to setting up the commission is now largely completed and it will be possible to proclaim part one of the National Transportation Act by mid September with the assurance that the commission can then begin to function immediately.

After a good deal of reflection, I have come to the conclusion that, if you are still of the same mind, I would like to become president of the commission. The position is one which I believe I can fill adequately, and which will give me the opportunity of continued public service for several years. While a demanding and responsible position, it would not involve the same pressures as there are upon a minister of the crown. Though my general health seems to be excellent, I have, as you know, found these pressures very great in the past three years.

I believe it would be in the public interest at this time to have a younger man assume the portfolio of transport and, happily, in the government and in the ranks of your supporters in the House of Commons, there are several who could fill that office as well as I can.

One of the main reasons I agreed to leave the public service and enter public life in 1953, was that I was persuaded by Mr. St. Laurent and Mr. Smallwood that I could make some contribution to a smooth transition of Newfoundland from its earlier status to a full integrated Canadian province. Not only has confederation now been almost universally accepted in Newfoundland, but there are happily several men active in public life today who could represent Newfoundland effectively in the cabinet.

My main reluctance, therefore, in leaving public life is that, in doing so, I shall be breaking that close association I have had with you, in opposition and in government, since you became the leader of the Liberal party. While we have not always seen eye to eye on every public question, I have never faltered in my conviction that our party made a happy choice for Canada in 1958. I have been proud to be associated with you and our other colleagues in the government of our country, and in the indispensable work you have done to strengthen and broaden the foundations of a united Canada, which I believe history will recognize as the greatest of your many public achievements.

Despite my reluctance to sever this relationship which has been a happy one for me, I feel that I should accept the opportunity for somewhat less strenuous public service offered by the presidency of the Canadian Transport Commission and, if you agree, ask you to accept my resignation as Minister of Transport as soon as it is convenient for you to have the commission established.

In doing so, I want to express my deep appreciation of your unfailing understanding and support of my efforts in public life as one of your supporters, and my gratitude for your friendship.

Yours ever,
J. W. Pickersgill

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September 11, 1967.

The Honourable J. W. Pickersgill,
Minister of Transport,
Ottawa.

My dear Jack:

I have already told you with what great regret I received your letter of September 5 indicating your desire to retire from the government and your willingness to accept the presidency of the Canadian Transport Commission, an appointment which I discussed with you some time ago.

While I know that this appointment is a most important and responsible one and will give you a further opportunity for public service, I cannot help but feel sad at the thought that it will mean your departure from the cabinet and from the political life of