

I have therefore again to inform you that the Government adhere to this answer conveyed to you by Mr. Fielding.

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) WILFRID LAURIER.

A. D. Provand, Esq.
Rideau Club,
Ottawa.

OTTAWA, APRIL 20th. 1901.

To the Right Honourable Sir Wilfrid Laurier,
Prime Minister.

Dear Sir,

CHIGNECTO RAILWAY.

I beg to acknowledge receipt of a copy of your answer to the letter of the Trustees to the Investors, which I find is the same as your letter to me of the 20th. ult., and which was merely a sentence taken from my letter to you of the 14th. ult. That sentence was a summary of the offer in Mr. Fielding's letter to me of the 25th January, in which, after suggesting that I should recommence proceedings by introducing a private bill to revive the Company's charter, he gave me an assurance that "the Government would assist me so far as might be necessary to secure a hearing for the bill before a Committee of the House." This was intended by the Hon. Mr. Fielding as a concession to us and as your answer to the Trustees is a repetition, in substance, of the same offer I may inferentially presume you also consider it to be so. It is therefore necessary to consider what is the nature of this offer.

I have consulted Members, Counsel practising before Committees of the House and Sir John Bourinot the Clerk of the House of Commons and am assured by all of them that they never knew a private railway bill asking for a charter or for the renewal of one being refused a second reading by the House, and that such bills are invariably read a second time and sent to a Committee.

There has been one exception to this rule, namely, when the bill was introduced in 1896 to revive this Company's charter, on that occasion the opposition, during the temporary absence of Government supporters, departed from the practice of the House, and, treating that bill differently from any previous one, defeated it on a snap division by one vote.

Therefore, the assurance you have given the Trustees comes to this, that if a private bill is introduced to renew the Company's charter, it will not suffer the indignity of being summarily rejected but will be sent to a Committee.

In my efforts to obtain justice for our investors I have frequently had to draw your attention to the fact that we are treated differently from Canadian investors, and the subject of this letter is another illustration of the truth of my statement. If any Canadian Company were to introduce a private bill for a railway charter, it would be read a second time by the House as a matter of course. The authorities I have consulted do not know of any instance to the contrary, except the case of our own bill in 1896. But if our investors now introduce a bill—those who on the invitation of the Canadian Parliament and Government have spent \$4,000,000 in Canada for its benefit—they are told they must look upon its receiving a second reading as a concession obtainable by favour of the