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THE RAILWAY POLICY DRAIGNED

Mr. John Oliver's Speech in Legislature on the Government's Position.

In discussing the Government's position in regard to railway matters this session Mr. John Oliver, M.P.P., delivered the following speech:

Mr. Oliver said: I observe, sir, that the estimates as brought down are not the same as they were when originally passed by the executive. Some time before the estimates were closed, members were asked to go to the office of the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and look over the estimates prepared for their districts. Further than that, I believe the majority of the members of the House, having in view the necessity of curtailing expenditure, were fairly well satisfied with the estimates as then provided. According to the best information I have been able to obtain, these estimates, after being passed by the executive, were submitted to a so-called caucus meeting, with the result that the estimates for districts represented by the opposition were cut, in some cases by thousands of dollars, and the estimates for districts represented by some supporters of the government were increased by a similar amount. I believe a true statement of the facts, which can be substantiated by a number of gentlemen in the House. I myself saw the estimates, as prepared in the office of the Chief Commissioner, for several districts, and they are not the same as the estimates laid before this House. Mr. McInnes: I was called down to the Lands and Works Department to suggest as to what was the expenditure which would satisfy my district, and the sum of \$8,000 was agreed upon; and I find the estimates brought into this House give only \$5,000 for that purpose, having been cut down to that extent.

Mr. Oliver: I had no intention of suggesting that Mr. Martin's influence had anything to do with the matter; and more than that, I regret that the leader of the opposition should have made such a charge. Mr. McInnes: I have completely absolved that honorable gentleman from my connection with the alteration of the estimates. Mr. Oliver: A great many things for which the honorable senior member for Vancouver is blamed have as little foundation in fact as this. Now, looking at the appropriations for roads, streets and bridges, admitting that in cases it might be necessary to cut down this expenditure, what shall we say of a government, claiming to be a business government, which curtails expenditure in matters of vital concern to the country, while unnecessarily and unwarrantably increasing the cost of administration? No business man, in his own private affairs, would adopt this method of retrenchment. He would certainly not strangle his business and increase his living expenses.

Freight Commissioner. I find some money provided for a freight commission, but the cost of it, as claimed by some, this appropriation should be granted, because it was recommended by resolution of the Central Farmers' Institute, which expressed itself as follows: "Resolved, that this institute desires to impress upon the government and the Canadian Pacific Railway company the necessity of continuing the present tariff on this appropriation, in the words conducted by him during the past session."

How was this work conducted? I believe Mr. Palmer is very efficient employee of the provincial government. In addition to his permanent official duties he undertook the work of trying to get better freight rates from the railway and steamboat companies. He has the interests of the people of the province, and I believe the results justified his employment in that behalf. But, sir, it is that any reason why he should be employed specially for that? The nature of the work negatives the idea of permanency in connection with it. Its character was that of a special commission to perform a particular duty, applicable to the time and occasion, and challenge any gentleman to demonstrate to the satisfaction of members of the House that there is justification for continuing such a commission from one year's end to another. The idea is absurd. I was in touch with the members of the Farmers' Institute when they passed the resolution. I have just read, and they certainly had no idea at all that a permanent appointment of a tariff commissioner was to be created. I observe in the estimates, the sum of \$200 as additional remuneration to Mr. Palmer for this work, and I think I am voicing the views of members of the House when I suggest that there would be no objection to his receiving this amount, under the same condition as last year; but that there is absolutely no necessity for creating a permanent additional appointment. The real reason for this appointment is not to be found in its necessity, but in the political expediency which may exist of creating a new position for some friend of the government.

Mr. Oliver: The honorable gentleman says "no." I am willing to accept his statement, but it looks very much that Mr. Oliver: The honorable gentleman says "no." I am willing to accept his statement, but it looks very much that Mr. Oliver: The honorable gentleman says "no." I am willing to accept his statement, but it looks very much that

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man whose interest it was—and I wish to say nothing disrespectful of him—to get out of paying just as much of these assessments as he possibly could, being largely interested in the dyking area. I contend that disinterested parties should have been elected to act upon the commission, and men of experience, against whom no suspicion could have rested. Disapproved of Commission.

When I saw in the Gazette that this commission had been appointed, I came all the way to Victoria to express my disapproval of it, and to endeavor to show the government that it was undesirable to appoint these men, but my recommendations had absolutely no weight with the government.

"That Disputed 1,800 Acres." I want to add a word of explanation concerning one of these dyking areas. Of the Maple Ridge dyking scheme, undertaken by commissioners, there were some 1,800 acres belonging to the Dominion government, but, sir, certain parties had an arrangement with the Dominion, whereby, in the event of their reclaiming this land, they were to receive a grant of it from the Dominion government. When this work was undertaken by the dyking commissioners the commissioners very properly assessed this land. But, sir, when the government took over this work a new assessment was made, and these 1,800 acres were not assessed at all, and the cost of dyking there was placed on the balance of the area, an act for which there was no justification whatever. And, sir, I say this government did not go to work in the proper manner when they appointed the dyking commission to deal with this particular dyking area, before the assessment in that area was made just and right.

Proposed Settlement Ill-advised. What have we before us to-day, sir? It is commonly reported and generally believed that it is the intention of this government to bring down an act authorizing the government to accept a portion of these lands in lieu of the amounts due to the government. What is the position of the owners of the lands? They are asked to relinquish a portion of their lands for a debt which they do not owe.

The People's Wishes. I have a letter here which will show to the members of this House very clearly what the people want in regard to this matter, signed by the owners of the Maple Ridge dyking areas. It reads as follows: "At a meeting of land owners of the Maple Ridge dyking district, held on Monday, January 13th, 1902, the following resolutions were passed: 1. That in order to enable us, the land owners, to utilize our lands so as to enable us to pay our taxes, we respectfully request the government to construct necessary outlets and ditches so as to enable us to drain our lands under the present conditions is impossible. 2. That the original assessment made by the dyking commissioners (being just and right), should be adopted, and that the government should take this action immediately, as will allow this property to be assessed for its just proportion of the cost of the work. 3. That payment of overdue and accruing assessments for the next five (5) years be deferred and spread over the balance of the year, on condition that money be borrowed, on condition that permanent improvements to the value of at least double the amount of accumulating payments shall be placed upon the lands. 4. That if the government accede to our request as outlined in the foregoing resolutions, we are desirous of the government taking over any portion of our land in lieu of assessments, and we will be glad to utilize our lands and meet our payments when due."

W. J. BONSON, Chairman. T. F. HARRIS, Secretary. We the undersigned land owners in the Maple Ridge dyking area, fully endorse the enclosed resolutions: W. J. Harris, T. E. Bonson, W. Marshall, Wm. Hampton, R. Brooke, John Lally, J. D. Callaghan, T. Marshall, J. John Hampton, H. H. Sharpe, Robt. Kennedy, T. S. Hall, M. D.

I say, sir, that is a practical and business like proposition, and I further say it is the only way in which these lands can be dealt with at all satisfactorily. I say, sir, that every gentleman present at the large public meetings which considered this matter, unanimously endorsed these resolutions, and a copy of them was forwarded to the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works.

Mr. Curtis: How much is owing the government for the Maple Ridge dyking scheme? Mr. Oliver: Something over \$300,000. Hon. Mr. Wells: We propose to take power to bring about an amicable adjustment, which will only apply to those who wish to come under it, and not to those who do not wish to come under it. Mr. Oliver: I do not think the explanation of the honorable gentleman is at all satisfactory. The honorable gentleman practically admits that it is along those lines that they propose to legislate. What position will the government be in? They will have on their hands a piece of land here and there all over that district, and what are they going to do with it? Do they ask sensible men to believe that they can dispose of that land to better advantage than the settlers can themselves? I say such a policy will result in a very serious loss to this province. And, sir, if this matter is taken in hand and dealt with as a straight business proposition, nearly every dollar owing to the province on behalf of these dykes can be recovered, and without inflicting any hardship upon the land owners. There is no difficulty in getting back the money advanced with regard to these lands, if they are put into a condition which will enable the farmers to utilize them. The present position is this: Intending settlers will not invest in those lands or settle upon them under existing conditions. Further expenditure must be made before these lands can be utilized; and as I have pointed out, the present land owners do not wish to dispose of their land.

I may say in this connection that I am informed that the government has received petitions from some of the land owners asking them to make a settlement on the basis of the government taking a portion of the land. But there seems to be some question as to the way in which the signatures were obtained. I am informed by a very credible witness that Mr. Higginson, one of the commissioners appointed by the government, engaged himself in securing them. The other day the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works declared that there was no expense attached to this com-

mission. I would like to ask if he can give me any further information as to the employment of Mr. Higginson's pony team at four or five dollars per day to drive the commissioners around? Hon. Mr. Wells: You gave me the first intimation I had of the matter; but Mr. Higginson, I suppose, is at liberty to use his pony for that purpose. Mr. Oliver: It seems to be hard to extract information. Apparently there are many things going on in the province which the honorable gentleman has no idea of.

The Dyking Question Resumed. There is so much difference in the location and description of the lands enclosed in these dyking areas that legislation which will apply to one section may be altogether unworkable in another. I think the government should ascertain what is required to be done in each of these dyking areas separately. This opinion is endorsed by many of the land owners, and under peculiar conditions, Commissioner introduced his bill into the House dealing with this dyking question that he will consent to refer it to a special committee, which shall have power to secure for persons and papers and take evidence with a view of ascertaining what is best to be done to settle this vexed question.

The Land Owners Not Herebefore Considered. In years past the land owners have not been considered as complainants, but frequently have been made to me that they have been unable to get the necessary information; that they have practically been insulted by the public works engineers, and have been refused information; and although their property was practically mortgaged to such an extent that they were unable to pay their taxes, they were not allowed to have any say in the matter at all.

The Railway Policy. Now I want to talk about railways. We have a government which announced as its policy that it intended to open up this province by means of railways. Sir, a year ago, we devoted a great deal of time in perfecting an act of this legislature to provide money for the building of railways in the province. In regard to the Premier, and his statements made a few months ago by the Premier, in which he said: "That measure, I may add, was framed in accordance with what the government thought was the expressed and well understood wishes of the people in regard to the measure of control the government should exercise over railways assisted by means of public money. Sir, I believe to be sound public policy. The conditions were such as I was willing, as a private individual in promoting the extension of the E. & N. railway north, to accept; and were conditional upon the co-operation we felt we were entitled to on the part of the Dominion government. If no railways have been undertaken under the legislation of last year, and were conditional upon the co-operation we felt we were entitled to on the part of the Dominion government. Our policy was strictly in line with the representations we made to Ottawa by letter, and by the action of the government of the V. V. & E. Company ever since forward with their proposition at all. It was stated to the executive, and it will not now be denied, that with the exception of 30 miles at each end of the building of the main line of the V. V. & E. over the Hope mountain depended upon receiving the Dominion subsidy in addition.

In considering the cost of railway construction in this province, and the undeveloped state of the country, I personally would not, and no other person or company would, think of building lines of railway such as were contemplated into new districts without further aid than the province can afford to give. We can grant lands, it is true, but everybody knows the lingo and cry, which is right or wrong, that has been raised against such a policy. Without the minerals and timber as well, which, of course, would be out of the question, no company would want land, unless that land included the best and most arable tracts required for purposes of settlement. The government is prepared to consider any such proposition provided always that the public interests are properly safeguarded, and that they are in accordance with our general policy. This was the policy of the government in the construction of this same Coast-Kootenay line upon terms enormously extravagant compared with those authorized by the Loan bill, and without the safeguards imposed by that act.

I will go further than that and point out to the members of the legislature just how sincere is the feigned anxiety of the government to secure the construction of the Coast-Kootenay line. I say emphatically, and I am in a position to prove it to any unprejudiced member, that the government is not desirous of securing the construction of this line upon such terms as would be advantageous to the people of the province.

Driving the Truth Home. Now, Mr. Speaker, I will read from correspondence and telegrams to prove what I have said. As I know these matters are sometimes very tedious, I want to say before going into them that it is my intention to have copies of the more important papers distributed to members of the House. The first document I will read is an extract from a letter which was received from the manager of the Olla Copper Mining and Smelting Company, dated New York, February 28th. I placed this letter fully and unreservedly in the hands of the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, and it was returned to me, after he had an opportunity of perusing it. The extract I wish to refer to reads as follows: "The provincial government is contemplating a considerable expenditure to secure the construction of this line of

railway within a short time. The provincial subsidy per mile is stated to be \$4,000 and the Dominion subsidy \$2,000 per mile—a combined total of \$12,000 per mile. What that subsidy is for is the provincial government to retain both these cash bonuses for their own use, and to issue to our company bonds of the province of British Columbia to the value of \$1,200 per mile of our main line, and for our branches, for which we will issue to the government bonds on our own road to the value of \$12,000 per mile, so that the government will not be out a single cent, and what will have the Dominion subsidy of \$8,000 per mile in hard cash to the good. Our charter at the present time ends at Princeton, and we shall expect the government to extend our charter by special act to the coast, and east as far as the eastern boundary of the province, with authority to build all required branches and to operate and equip these branches either with steam or electricity at both ends. We will agree to allow the government of British Columbia to have a voice in the regulation of all freight and passenger traffic rates, and will agree to rates and put in a service, both in the interior, including camps and through the agricultural districts of the lower Fraser, better and more reasonable and serviceable than has been given to any district west of the Rocky mountains, and more than twice that of what eastern America has to-day in the line of railway accommodation." (Signed) W. C. McDOUGALL.

Mr. McInnes: What is the name of the company? Mr. Oliver: The Olla Copper Mining and Smelting Company. Mr. McInnes: Is that the company which has been advertising its prospects in the New York journals? Mr. Oliver: I only propose to say what I know of the company, and not to discuss matters that I am not familiar with. The company proposes to build the road for a cash bonus, and to give security that removes the province from any risk in the matter. I will now read a copy of a telegram sent by me to the company, dated Victoria, March 13th: "Manager Olla Copper Mining and Smelting Company, Temple Court Building, Beekman and Nassau Streets. Government will only negotiate on basis of cash subsidy. Will not consent to build until company obtains a Dominion subsidy. Another proposition before government. You must act quickly. J. OLIVER." In reply to this I received a telegram, dated New York, March 14th, as follows: "Cash subsidies acceptable; construction to commence when assistance obtained from Dominion. From the date of the cash subsidy and other terms, my letter February 28th will enable negotiations to proceed immediately. Answer fully by telegraph and post. W. C. McDOUGALL." I laid a copy of that telegram before the government, and it appeared to me that the government was not at all inclined or anxious to do anything or to see whether it was worth anything or not. While they did not actually tell me so that was the impression I received from their actions. Further than this, Mr. McInnes, the proposition made to the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, asked me if the company was prepared to put up \$100,000 as security, pending negotiations. (Hear, hear.) I immediately wired to the company as follows: "To Olla Copper Mining and Smelting Co., Temple Court Building, New York. Government demands immediate deposit of \$100,000 pending negotiations. JOHN OLIVER."

Sir, I looked at that as a final conclusion to the matter, but I considered that, in the interests of the province, it should not be allowed to drop; and I had further communications with the company. Before proceeding further, I will read a letter which I received from the company, dated March 19th, namely: "Dear Oliver, Esq., M.P.P., Victoria, B.C. I immediately wired you in reply that a cash bonus was acceptable by my company, and that construction would be commenced as soon as the Dominion government bonus was secured. The fact is we will not wait for the Dominion bonus, if the provincial government will give us \$4,000 per mile, but will go ahead as we are now doing, and will lay out the road. Our engineers are now at work in the Similkameen, between Princeton and Halls, Mr. James Heston being in charge, and we intend to keep them at work steadily by the whole line located, when the whole line built as quickly as possible, provided of course the government treats us fairly in the matter." (Signed) W. C. McDOUGALL.

Does that read like a bogus proposition? What reason could these men have for making a bogus offer to the government? Absolutely none. I will read an extract from another letter from the company, dated April 5th, 1902: "John Oliver, Esq. Yours of the 27th March received the day before yesterday. We have just discussed the proposition of the government to pay \$100,000 pending negotiations. In view of what you state that you have reason to believe that the government has entered into an agreement with another company to construct the same line of road—and this being confirmed to me from other sources, I could not ask our people to put up with a proposition which would be put up indefinitely." (Signed) W. C. McDOUGALL.

Acting upon authority from this company I submitted to the government a proposition in writing. This was about the week before the Easter adjournment. The letter was dated, Victoria, March 27th, and read as follows: "Hon. Chief Commissioner Lands and Works. (Copy) On behalf of the Olla Copper Mining and Smelting Co., of New York, I beg leave to submit to you the following proposition: "In consideration of a cash subsidy of \$4,000 per mile, payable as the work progresses, this company will build the proposed Coast-Kootenay railway with connections as required by the Loan bill of last year, the said subsidy to be repayable in 10 per cent. per annum of the gross earnings of the road, until the said subsidy without interest is repaid to the government, and the said road to be operated until after the subsidy has been repaid as aforesaid. "Freight and passenger rates to be approved by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. The government will be relieved of Crown lands the usual right of way, title grounds, terminal facilities, etc. Company to commence within three months after the said company obtains assistance from the Dominion government of not less than \$8,000 per mile. "Upon your government intimating to me that you are prepared to negotiate upon these terms, I will immediately wire for a representative of the company from New York to personally see the details." (Signed) "JOHN OLIVER."

Now, sir, speaking from memory, I am not quite sure of the day on which that proposition was handed in to the govern-

ment, but it was before the Easter adjournment. When I was home during the Easter recess I received a telegram from the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works asking me to go to Victoria to talk over this proposition. As I wish to point out, the question at that time was this: "This proposition had been made to the government by me, upon the authority of the company, and you will note, sir, the following paragraphs of the letter I have just read: "Upon your government intimating to me that you are prepared to negotiate upon these terms, I will immediately wire for a representative of the company from New York to personally settle the details." Sir, could anything be more clear or more business like? Did that government intimate that they were prepared to negotiate? No, sir, they did not. I received a letter from the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works to the effect that they would not consider me to come from New York. I must do it upon my own responsibility. He gave me no assurance whatever that the government was prepared to negotiate or even consider my proposition, and that it was only after I came back after the Easter recess that I saw the slightest hope held out by the commissioner that they would even take the matter into consideration. And, sir, the hope held out at that time was what? He told me that there was another proposition before the government, but that they would not consider it in a hurry, so that, if I thought it advisable, I could lay a further proposition before the government.

Now, on the 8th of April, acting upon that suggestion, I wired the company as follows: "To Olla Copper Mining and Smelting Co., Temple Court Building, Beekman and Nassau Streets. If satisfied with offer of 27th March, come and arrange details. Other proposition delayed pending your answer. JOHN OLIVER." Now, sir, in answer to that I received a telegram dated New York, April 10th, advising me that Mr. McDougall was coming to Victoria, which information I imparted to the Chief Commissioner in the following letter dated April 10th: "Hon. W. C. Wells, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Victoria. Honorable Sir—I beg leave to advise you that Mr. W. C. McDougall, manager of the Olla Copper Mining and Smelting Company, is coming to Victoria, for the purpose of entering into a contract with the government for the construction of the proposed Coast-Kootenay railway. I am, yours respectfully, JOHN OLIVER."

Just about this time I received information that the government was about to sign a contract with McLean Brothers, of Vancouver, if the contract had not already been signed. As I received this information, I immediately wired to reliable sources, I wrote to the Chief Commissioner that I expected the manager of the company to arrive in Victoria in a few days, and may say that I never received any word from him of that letter, and I immediately wired to the company to the effect that I believed the government was not inclined to deal with a contract which was made under a very precarious condition, and asked them to appoint an attorney. I may say that in a pencil note sent into the Chief Commissioner I informed him that if the government were to sign a contract with McLean Brothers, I would immediately have a solicitor appear, with full power to deny, and to go on behalf of the company, and there need be any delay whatever. I am in a position of authority from the company, and was at that time to appear before the government and instruct him in half of this company. As I have said, I received a telegram, dated New York, April 16th, which read: "John Oliver, M.P.P., Victoria, B.C. Will be in Victoria in ten days if you have a solicitor with full power to deny, and to take up deal; can prove ability to complete road. W. C. McDOUGALL."

I may say that I had received a previous telegram enquiring relative to the advisability of coming here, and I wired to him and urged him to come on at once, as I considered, from the position of the government and its narrow majority in the House, that it was not in a position to put through any railway legislation, such as the Canada Northern deal, and I am still of that opinion. Now, sir, I advised the manager to come at once, and received this telegram which I have just read: "I immediately wired the company to be sure of nothing (cheers), and asked him to wire me funds to retain a solicitor, which was done." (Hear, hear.) I may say I hold here this telegram, dated New York, April 16th, containing upon Mr. C. H. Lugin, power of attorney: "Charles H. Lugin, Solicitor, Victoria. This confers upon Chas. H. Lugin, of Victoria, British Columbia, absolute power of attorney to negotiate on behalf of the Olla Copper Mining and Smelting Company with the government for the construction of the proposed Coast-Kootenay railway, and to take up deal as fully as the company by its own resolution or act could do. W. C. McDOUGALL, Gen. Manager."

Now, in pursuance of the authority conveyed by that telegram—of course, I have no doubt the Attorney-General will set up and tell you that it is absolutely worthless—Mr. Eberhart: What is worthless? Mr. Oliver: No doubt the Attorney-General will set up and tell you that the authority conveyed by that telegram was worthless. Mr. Eberhart: Do you say the company is worthless? Mr. Oliver: Leave that for those who have least respect for the truth, but I have to say, I will now read a letter which shows what the company proposes to do and where it is: "To the Hon. W. C. Wells, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Victoria. Dear Sir—On behalf of the Olla Copper Mining and Smelting Co., of New York, I beg leave to submit to you the following proposition for the consideration of the government of British Columbia: "The company will construct, operate and maintain a railway of the gauge of four feet six inches, and of a length of about 100 miles, from some point on the coast of British Columbia in the neighborhood of English Bluff, near the mouth of the Fraser River, to the coast of British Columbia between the mouth of the Fraser River and the international boundary, via Chilliwack and the mouth of the Boundary Creek, and will also construct, operate and maintain a suitable steam car line between its Coast terminals and some city on Vancouver Island, so as to connect the city of Victoria with the most direct available route with said railway, and a-

worth buying. We can use with confidence, over, select what you guarantee that the value is the best value you can get. For a short time we will sell our goods at \$1.25 a sack. Sugar, 100 lb. cads. \$1.00. 25 lb. cads. \$1.75. For this week only—4.00 to buy your preserving. ROSS & CO. GROCERS.

MS Co., 255 Street.

CLAIM, situate in the vicinity of Chemulcan, on Mount Brenton, Mineral Claim, S. F. Erb, free miner's certificate, to apply to the Mineral Certificate of Improvements, above claim. Commenced before the certificate of Improvements of May, A. D., 1902.

Prize No. 8 Mineral the West Coast, Vancouver Division of Clayco located, Sidney B. Thomas Rhymer Mar. Certificate No. 190774, from the date hereof, Record for a Cert. for the purpose of Grant of the above notice that action, under commenced before the certificate of Improvements of April, A. D., 1902.

FOR SALE: The Colton Daily Times was sold for \$600 cash. Times Office.

MANILA. Tentative of St. Paul City En Route.

Paul, who has been trip to the Orient, and Mr. Shinano Maru this was his objective Far East, and he came here in the trans-Pacific. Speaking of the cholera epidemic of the city was splendidly carrying out, and altogether quarters are daily officers, and every man was in Manila. It arrived at one of the city was splendidly carrying out, and altogether quarters are daily officers, and every man was in Manila.

ORATORIA and Children.

Unremunerative Surveys. We have the member for Kamloops