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THE DAILY COLONIST

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A RAILWAY POLICY.

A correspondent has asserted that in the proposals submitted to the Provincial Government for assistance to various lines there is a total of 18,000 miles of new railway involved and that the annual charge against the Province in connection with the same would, if they were all accepted, amount to \$7,000,000. We are not in a position to verify these statements, but the Government is confronted by demands, which may possibly approximate in figures those referred to, and in any event they illustrate how difficult it is to arrive at any decision which will be satisfactory to parties interested in the various schemes, many of which have real merit, and would be entitled under other circumstances to have the most serious consideration of the Government and Legislature.

The Government, therefore, in formulating a railway policy, is embarrassed, not by the lack of material for consideration but by the plethora of schemes before it. What will be the issue of it all we have no means of knowing at the present time. Clearly, with a possible deficit in sight, owing to the losses of certain revenues, the Government cannot entertain any extensive policy of railway assistance. Increased burdens are being placed on the shoulders of municipalities in order that the increasing cost of education may be kept within check. Taxation has been nearly, if not actually, doubled in order that revenue may equal expenditure. Without large borrowing powers and no other method of increasing the revenue, it would be necessary to resort to materially increasing the expenditure for any purpose, without a corresponding increase in revenue to follow as a consequence.

It seems to us that the Government must take the responsibility of selecting from the propositions before it such as are calculated to supply the actual requirements of the settled portions of the country in need of transportation and those from which the returns from traffic are most likely to meet the guarantee of interest involved or the interest upon insured stock that may be given as a bonus. Some favor the giving of land grants, which do not involve the payment of cash. We believe, apart from the economic considerations involved, that the settlement of the country is opposed to such a policy, although we can conceive of conditions under which objections to these grants might be largely removed. At present the policy most favored, is that extensively adopted in Manitoba, of guaranteeing interest on a certain portion of the cost of construction.

The real objection that can be raised to that course is that conditions in the two Provinces are not similar. In Manitoba the cost of construction is at least half of what it is in British Columbia, and everywhere the traffic in sight, on account of growing crops, is sufficient to ensure payment of interest on bonds guaranteed. In this Province development must follow railway building and profits are not always continuous and in any one direction. Our experience in the past is sufficient to demonstrate that fact.

Therefore, the question of railway building in British Columbia is surrounded by difficulties of no ordinary nature and unusual in other Provinces, and by the very nature of things the Government is bound to go slow until the Dominion Government, by increased subsidies, can place the finances in a position to enable us to confidently and consistently assume the responsibilities involved.

ISOLATED AND WHY?

The above is the heading of an editorial in the St. John Daily Telegraph dealing with the position in Prince Edward Island, and is opinion that "the time has come when the Dominion Government will have to give due consideration to the demands of Prince Edward Island for fair play." This remark is no doubt the result of bitter complaints in the Island papers, partly aimed, it would appear, at Providence and partly against political conditions. A writer in the Charlottetown Guardian, after describing the halcyon days existing in that province before Confederation, states as a conclusion:

"We were prosperous and contented under the 12 1/2 per cent tariff. We owed no man anything but our duty. How changed are our circumstances today, owing half a million dollars, our tariff 30 to 32 per cent, our representation cut from six to four, with a further down to one before the year 1930 as we are sure to lose one of our seats in the census our population decreasing by increased taxation. Our young men and women are leaving for the west, our old men and children having to eke out on the farm; the farm only partially tilled; the mortgage increased. The position of the country in the hands of the lawyers who own the mortgages and compel the voters to support them! The drawn but those who live for the next twenty-five years will see that it is nearly true."

We have been reading about the difficulties of Canada are absolutely agreed.

Lord Rosebery and those opposed to Mr. Chamberlain tried to make capital out of the Canadian elections, in which, as we know, the question was not in issue. It is pointed out that the preferential question was not raised as a matter of party controversy because both parties were substantially agreed upon it. "Elections are fought on points of difference. They are not fought on points of agreement," says the Times. "The question of the tariff is a question of principle, and it is not a question of party."

In consideration of the standing of Lord Minto his views respecting Canada and the Dominion will have great weight in the minds of the people. His position of Mr. Chamberlain. Lord Minto's views are somewhat divided as to the result of the election. He is not a practical politician, but he is a statesman. He is not a practical politician, but he is a statesman. He is not a practical politician, but he is a statesman.

One of the terms of union which the little Island entered Confederation was that the Dominion should give it daily steam communication with the mainland. On account of the main-land communication with the mainland, the Dominion should give it daily steam communication with the mainland.

On the subject of Canadian sentiments in regard to preferential trade relations, Public Opinion says that the fact that the British Empire League is a non-party body does not deter Lord Minto at the dinner given to him by the league on Friday last from stating his views in forcible, if restrained, terms concerning the question of colonial preference.

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