The Mission To Ottawa

Premier Prior Presents Comprehensive Report of Representations Made.

A Strong and Well Sustained Argument for Better Terms.

Definite and Practical Proposition for Administration of Fisheries.

One of the most interesting state documents of the session is the report which was presented to the legislature yesterday of the mission to Ottawa some few weeks ago of the Premier, the Hon. Col. Prior, and the Attorney-General, Hon. D. W. Eberts, who following up the efforts in the same direction of Mr. Dunsmuir, during his premiership, elaborated with cogent argument the case then made out, and amplified and completed a very logical and convincing presentation. The "report of the delegates to Ottawa, 1903," as presented to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, treats generally and exhaustively of the various subjects discussed, and the requests pressed home for the consideration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his ministers by the champions of provincial interests. This report reads as follows:

May it Please Your Honor:

The undersigned have the honor to submit the following report of their visit to Ottawa, in which they were authorized by you to interview the members of the Dominion government with reference to certain matters in dispute between the Dominion of Canada and the province of British Colombia:

We left Victoria on Saturday, January 17, ultimo, and arrived in Ottawa on the afternoon of Friday, January 23, having arranged by wire with Sir Wilfrid Laurier, on the way, for a meeting of the members of the delegation with the members of the Dominion cabinet on Monday, the 26th of January. The meeting took place in the office of the Premier and President of the Privy Council, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a number of the members of the cabinet being present.

Hon. E. G. Prior, Premier, addressed the executive upon the objects of the delegation, outlining the subjects to be discussed. The purport of his remarks was as follows:

The delegation desired to present for the consideration of the Prime Minister and the members of the Dominion executive a number of matters connected with British Columbia affairs. To some extent the case was the same as it was in 1901, when Hon. Mr. Dunsmuir, as Premier, and the Attorney-General submitted their memorandum. It was not proposed to cover the whole of the ground then gone over. One or two of the issues of that day had been practically settled, and one or two others have adjusted themselves in the lapse of time. The matters to which it was wished especially to draw attention were the following:

Readjustment of the financial relations of the province with the Dominion.

The question of fisheries in British Columbia.

The regulation of Mongolian immigration.

The right of the province to a greater share of the revenue arising out of the operation of the Chinese Immigration Act.

Readjustment of some of the boundaries of Indian reserves in British Columbia, in accordance with the agreement arrived at some years ago between the two governments, viz., that the boundaries of Indian reserves should be readjusted from time to time in accordance with the growth or diminution of the Indian population.

There were also several matters, such as the rights of the province to foreshores and the minerals under the same; the minerals under Indian reserves; the salaries of judges; and the co-operation of the two governments in respect to railway construction, which it was desired to discuss with the various ministers having charge, respectively, of such matters.

In regard to the readjustment of financial relations, the delegation had several important considerations to urge, in addition to what had already been presented as contained in the report of the delegation to Ottawa in 1901. However, as the premiers of other provinces had an appointment with the Prime Minister the following day (Tuesday, January 27) the Premier deferred the remarks on that subject until a future occasion.

British Columbia were coincident with the claims of the other provinces, the delegation was heartily in sympathy with them, and was working in accord. The position of British Columbia was, however, a unique one, owing to its peculiar geographical configuration, its remoteness from the Eastern trade centres, and other conditions which would be referred to in due season; and on account of these considerations the delegation claimed that, while the resolutions of the Quebec conference of provincial premiers are in the right direction, they do not go far enough, so far as the province of British Columbia is concerned.

Hon. D. M. Eberts, Attorney-General, had special charge of the case in reference to fisheries, and the Premier, Colonial Prior, requested him to present it for their consideration, as being more familiar with the subject than he was.

Mr. Eberts then addressed Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues at some length, dealing very fully with the subject of the fisheries. The substance of Mr. Eberts' remarks is contained in a memorandum submitted by the delegation to the Prime Minister, a copy of which accompanies this report.

On the following day, Tuesday, 27th January, the members of the delegation met, as arranged by previous appointment, with the representatives of the various provinces who attended the inter-provincial conference at Quebec, as follows:

Hon. G. W. Ross, Premier, Ontario.
Hon. S. N. Parent, Premier, Quebec.
Hon. E. G. Prior, Premier, British Columbia.
Hon. R. P. Roblin, Premier, Manitoba.
Hon. G. N. Murray, Premier, Nova Scotia.
Hon. L. J. Tweedie, Premier, New Brunswick.
Hon. Arthur Peters, Premier, Prince Edward Island.
Hon. H. Archambeault, Quebec.
Hon. D. M. Eberts, British Columbia.
Hon. E. P. Latchford, Ontario.
Hon. W. Pugsley, New Brunswick.
Hon. H. T. Duffy, Quebec.
Hon. Benjamin Rogers, Prince Edward Island.
Hon. John F. Whear, Prince Edward Island.

There was a conference held in the Russell House in the morning, when the various members signed a printed document containing the resolution passed at the Quebec conference, in which was included the request of the Premier of British Columbia to Hon. S. N. Parent respecting the special claims of that province. It was agreed to meet again in the afternoon and present, pro forma, the resolution as signed, to Right Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, which was duly done. Hon. G. W. Ross, Premier of Ontario, was the spokesman of the members of the conference. Sir Wilfrid replied. In doing so, he assured the representatives of the provinces present that the resolutions would be considered, stating that it might be necessary to amend the British North America Act, but that was, however, a matter for consideration.

The members of the delegation again waited on Sir Wilfrid on Wednesday morning, January 28, when they discussed with the Premier and his colleagues the question of Oriental immigration. What was stated on that occasion is contained in a memorandum submitted to Sir Wilfrid subsequently, as a record of the discussion. Sir Wilfrid pointed out that, with reference to the Japanese, the Japanese government had of its own volition restricted immigration from Japan to a practically prohibitive point, and that the enactment of legislation on the lines of the Natal Act was not only wholly unnecessary but would be gratuitously insulting to a friendly power with which the Dominion government was desirous of cultivating the most friendly trade relations. Sir Wilfrid said that the Dominion government would not in the future disallow anti-Chinese legislation which it was competent for the provincial legislature to pass, but would discountenance discrimination so far as the Japanese were concerned.

In respect to the refund of the Chinese head tax to the province, Sir Wilfrid Laurier pointed out that an act had been passed at the last session of the Dominion parliament providing for an order-in-council for a refund of 50 per cent. after July 1, 1902. The delegation urged that the order-in-council be passed immediately, and that the act should be amended allowing the province 75 per cent., and should apply to the whole period during which the Chinese Restriction Act had been in force.

Arrangements were then made with Sir Wilfrid for a subsequent conference, at which to discuss the question of financial relations, and the time agreed on was the 4th of February.

In the meantime, Mr. Eberts, accompanied by the Provincial Deputy Commissioner of Fisheries, had an interview with the officials of the Marine and Fisheries Department. Unfortunately Hon. Mr. Prefontaine, minister, was unable to be present, owing to other engagements.

A memorandum on financial relations, being the Premier's statement in full, is attached. This is a replica of what was handed to Sir Wilfrid on the occasion of meeting on Wednesday, February 4. The memorandum was accompanied by maps showing the settled portions of British Columbia marked in red, and the inhabitable valleys of the interior not yet settled, in green; also by statistical appendices, and the report of the delegation to Ottawa in 1901.

On this latter occasion several other matters were taken up, including the salaries of Supreme and County Court judges and assistance to railways in the province.

By appointment, the members of the delegation met the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Hon. Mr. Prefontaine, at 9.30 a. m. on Thursday, 5th February, the interview lasting one hour. They then met the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries and Mr. Venning of that department, and discussed the modus vivendi of 1901-02 until 12:30.

An appointment was made with the Minister of Justice in order to discuss the question of the Alaska boundary. Unfortunately Hon. Mr. Fitzpatrick was ill, and the conference did not take place.

At 8 p. m. the same day another conference was held with the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and Mr. Venning, to discuss the details of accounts between the province and the Dominion under the modus vivendi, the question of fish hatcheries, etc. The conference lasted until 4:50 p. m.

Subsequently, by appointment, a meeting was held in the office of the Minister of the Interior, when the following questions were discussed:

1. The readjustment of the boundaries of Indian reserves, by which a return to the province should be made of any portion of such reserves too large for the depleted tribes, in accordance with the agreement originally made with the Dominion government. Hon. Mr. Sifton promised to take the matter up immediately with Mr. Vowell, Indian commissioner in British Columbia, whom he had sent for, and give an early reply.

2. Mineral rights in Indian reserves. The minister thought that the matter was one easy of arrangement, and promised to send the government of British Columbia a proposition at an early date. He said that the administration of mineral lands in the railway belt according to arrangement had worked well and satisfactorily.

3. Nicola Indian reserve, False creek Indian reserve, all of which were matters brought to the attention of the provincial government by correspondence.

In the evening another conference was held with the Hon. the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, the Deputy Minister and Mr. Venning, during which the details of the fisheries settlement under the modus vivendi of 1901-02 were discussed until 10 p. m. A definite proposal was submitted, copy of which is herewith given.

During the stay of your delegates in Ottawa they were afforded every facility to present their views, and they desire to express their appreciation of the courtesy and attention shown them by Sir Wilfrid and his colleagues.

ONE OF THE NEW FEATURES

in the case this year is the presentation of the Nova Scotia settlement terms of 1868, and grounds of the Nova Scotia grievances being in several respects identical with those of this province. Particularly was it emphasized at the time, that the provision made for the local government was insufficient, and that the special conditions of the province—its remoteness, isolation, etc., gave it good grounds for special consideration. This feature of the case was argued at great length, and a special memorandum was submitted to Sir Wilfrid Laurier on the subject, the delegates pointing out that the act of Union was not like the laws of the Medes and Persians, unalterable and irrevocable, but subject to modifications as circumstances demand.

In emphasizing the special circumstances held to justify British Columbia's claim for more equitable recognition from the Dominion, the delegates pointed out:

1. The cost of administration, owing to the physical character of the country, a map accompanying to effectively illustrate the point taken.

2. The distance from the commercial, industrial and administrative centres of Eastern Canada.

3. The non-industrial character of the province as compared with Eastern Canada, whereby a larger percentage of goods are imported and consumed, increasing the contributions to the federal treasury in the way of taxes, in a ratio of three to one.

4. The disadvantage of the province in relation to the markets for its special products.

"As you will see by this map," said the memorandum elaborating the case as to financial relations and referring to the first stated of these special circumstances, "we have only begun to touch the rim of the province, and yet the government has, according to a statement prepared for me by the government engineer, who says it is well within the mark, built 6,000 miles of road, at a cost of $12,000,000, and 5,000 miles of trails, at a cost of $1,000,000, or $13,000,000 in all. Now, to give the rest of the province still undeveloped a similar system of communication will cost I do not know how many times more. Few of these roads can be considered as finished roads at that. They are, as a rule, nine or ten feet wide, simply graded roughly, and constantly being repaired and improved. There are also numerous bridges and culverts to be constructed, which are very expensive indeed. I am submitting the particulars of a few roads that have been built of late years, to give you an idea of the cost in different districts, as follows:

MAIN WAGON ROADS.

	Cost per Mile.
In East Kootenay	$ 1,000
Revelstoke	3,350
Slocan Riding	1,600
Yale (West)	4,544
Yale (East)	1,700
Richmond (Coast)	2,000
Kootenay	1,135
Near Vancouver (Coast)	2,220
	1,510

All of these are still under construction.

"The physical configuration of the country, therefore, greatly increases the cost of government. Population can never be concentrated or compact, and, as a consequence, the cost of the individual factor of population is proportionately very much greater than in the Eastern provinces. The revenues, as a consequence, to be derived must be very much less in proportion to the area, or the individual must be taxed very much higher. One or both of these results invariably follow.

"I have made a comparison of the cost of the various services in the different provinces under different heads, as nearly as they could be grouped from what appears in the public accounts, and the result is as follows, which is substantially correct, though subject to correction in some details:

	B. C.	Man.	Ont.	Que.	N. B.	N. S.	P.E.I.
Population (in round figures	180,000	256,000	2,185,000	1,650,000	330,000	460,000	103,250
Administration of Justice	$1.20	$ .52	$ .20	$ .33	$ .055	$ .16	$ .16
Civil Government	.95	.....	.13	.18	.095	.....	.....
Legislation	.25	.18	.065	.09	.11	.11	.07
Public Institutions	.60	.....	.36	.31	.24	.36	.30
Public Works	2.44	.90	.12	.065	.60	.34	.70
Education (1891)	5.56	5.04	1.91	1.91	1.92	1.81	1.44
Total cost of Administration	11.02	4.00	1.85	2.70	2.40	2.04	3.00

"There is still to take in the cost of municipal government. As it happens, there are only two provinces which compile municipal statistics, Ontario and British Columbia, but for our purposes Ontario may be taken as fairly representative of the others. The cost of municipal government, according to latest published returns of the Ontario Department of Statistics, is $6 per head of the population. We have now the basis of a perfect comparison between British Columbia for the year 1901, in respect to the cost per head for governmental purposes, and it is as follows:

	Ont.	B.C.
Provincial	$ 1 85	$12 60
Municipal	6 00	1 75
Customs	5 28	16 00
Excise	2 00	.....*
	15 13	30 35

*Included in customs.

In further elaboration of how the financial situation works out in new districts an hypothetical case is stated: Last year there was a proposal to settle one hundred families in the fertile valley of the Bulkley river, South of Hazelton, on the Skeena river. The members of the colony, as inducements, asked that the government should assist them in taking in their families and effects, to give them 320 acres of land free for each family, to build a road from Hazelton to the settlement, 75 miles in length, and build schools, etc. Upon making an estimate, the initial cost for the first five years was as follows:

Road from Hazelton, 75 miles	$ 75,000
Two school houses	5,000
One Government building	1,200
Cross roads	5,000
	$86,200

In addition to this, to be taken into account, thus:

Salary, teacher $1,800 00	
Salary govt. official 1,200 00	
Or a total in five years of	15,000 00
Grand total outlay in 5 years	$101,200 00

The greatest possible revenue that could have been reaped in return would have been:

Poll tax, at $3 per head per annum on 300 male adults	900 00
Land tax, on a valuation of the government price of land for purchase, at $5 per acre	1,200 00
	2,100 00
Or, in five years	10,500 00

At the end of five years, provided the