

POOR
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ON JOURNAL

THE C.N.R. BRANCH LINES

Premier's Reference to Action of Upper House Dealt
With by Senator Griesbach

In the report of the Right Honorable Mackenzie King's speech in the First Presbyterian church on Friday evening last, you report him as follows:

"Dealing with the railway situation, Premier King outlined the senate action which threw out the Canadian National Railway Branch Lines bill, the first time on the grounds that twenty-six lines were included in the one bill and on a three year work basis instead of yearly; and the second time, passed only a few of the twenty-six bills introduced."

The Bulletin report of October 11th on the same subject is as follows:

"The senate of Canada threw out that legislation (1923) and gave as its reason that it was impossible for it to pass the act as all the lines were grouped together. Separate bills for each branch was then submitted to the senate (1924) but practically all the bills were again thrown out."

It will be observed that according to the Bulletin, Mr. King said, "Practically all the bills were again thrown out," and according to the Journal, "Only a few" of the bills were passed by the senate. One would have thought that the prime minister of Canada, making an important statement of this nature, would have preferred to have confined himself to a simple statement of facts, although, of course, it is quite obvious that the expressions which he used were much more suitable to the object which he had in view, which was to discredit the senate, rather than to state the facts. I hasten, therefore, to supply what was missing from the premier's speech, with respect to railway legislation introduced into, and dealt with by the senate, in the present year. The following statement was prepared by the clerk of the railway committee of the senate:

Session 1924			
Authorized by Bills			
As Introduced in Senate			
	Miles		
Alberta	237	\$ 5,710,000	
B.C.	139	2,942,300	
Man.	66	1,478,000	
*N.B.	41	2,123,000	
N.S.	71	3,661,000	
Quebec	31	1,462,000	
Sask.	380	10,935,000	
Totals	965	\$28,311,300	
Reductions			
	By Senate	Voted	Miles
Alberta .. \$	1,170,000	\$ 4,540,000	192
B.C.	161,300	2,781,000	123
Man.	625,000	853,000	47
*N.B.	2,123,000		
N.S.	3,500,000	161,000	4
Quebec ..	1,000,000	462,000	14
Sask.	6,669,000	4,266,000	133
Totals ..	\$15,248,300	\$13,063,000	513

*Assuming that running rights will be obtained over the C.P.R.

Quoting again from the Journal, Mr. King said, "And today, our competitor, the Canadian Pacific railway, is building branch lines into territory where some of these branches should have gone." I cannot recall at the moment, any such territory except that to be served by a proposed branch line running northwesterly from Lloydminster. Bill No. 46, forty-five miles of line. It is to be observed, that six branch line bills were brought before the senate to serve the province of Alberta, and that five of these bills were passed. The sixth bill, the Lloydminster line, was rejected by the senate. I have in my possession, letters of instruction from the board of trade of Lloydminster, desiring me to endeavor to

secure the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway into Lloydminster, and out northwesterly into the very same territory covered by the proposed Canadian National railway bill. In effect, the board of trade of Lloydminster, instructed me to oppose the Canadian National railway branch line bill if the passing of the same would in any way militate against the Canadian Pacific railway entering the territory in question. Not being able to give any such assurance on this latter point, I supported this Canadian National railway bill in the senate, which was defeated and because, in my opinion, individuals from the Lloydminster country, made private representations to the members of the senate. At the present moment, it is stated that the Canadian Pacific railway is, in point of fact, building into Lloydminster, with the intention of building northwesterly into the territory covered by the Canadian National railway bill No. 46. If this be so, it may be unsatisfactory to Mr. King, and it may even be unsatisfactory to the Canadian National railway, but it would appear to be eminently satisfactory to the people of Lloydminster.

As will appear, from the foregoing statement, Saskatchewan's railway program was the most heavily curtailed by the action of the senate. I attach hereto memorandum from the bureau of statistics on railway mileage in Canada, from which it appears that the province of Saskatchewan has and when the present railway program is carried out, will continue to have, more miles of railway in proportion to its population than any other province in Canada.

DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS TRANSPORTATION BRANCH OTTAWA

Railway Single Track Mileage and Population by Provinces, 1923

Province	Ry. Mileage	Population	Population per Mile
Alberta	4,783.57	634,211	132.6
British Columbia ..	4,394.71	553,556	125.9
Manitoba	4,520.79	642,827	142.2
New Brunswick ..	1,947.27	396,904	203.8
Nova Scotia	1,447.25	532,593	368.0
Ontario	10,956.57	3,028,907	276.4
P. E. Island	276.33	87,998	317.8
Quebec	4,919.07	2,443,555	496.8
Saskatchewan	6,517.53	814,232	124.9
Total	40,093.96	9,146,456	228.1

If the Right Honorable the Prime Minister intends to hang his proposals for senate reform on the senate's action in connection with the branch lines bills, he is not making a very sound beginning. Mr. King's proposal that the constitution be altered to provide that, identical bills which pass the commons three times in succession shall become law in spite of the senate's veto, is much in the same class, since Mr. King will be sore put to it to find more than one or two cases, notably, an amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act, in which the senate has rejected a measure which has passed the commons three times in succession and very few cases where the senate has rejected a measure which has passed the commons twice in succession. In other words, Mr. King's proposal for senate reform, is a mere rattling of the sword in the scabbard and is no reform at all based upon the experiences of the past.

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