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## FIELDING CONTROLS SITUATION ST. JOHN NOT RECOGNIZED

Dr. Daniel Draws Attention of Parliament to Desire of Canadian Pacific to Land Mails at St. John, but Minister of Finance Scouts the Idea That St. John is in the Running With Halifax and Will Not Permit a Trial.

When on the item of mail subsidies and steamship subventions between Great Britain and Canada of \$500,000 was before Parliament last week, Mr. Daniel, of St. John, put in a good word for St. John. The following is from Hansard:

Mr. Daniel—When the Canadian Pacific Railway undertook their part of the work as sub-contractors under the Allan line, they understood that they could sail between Liverpool and St. John direct. The minister will remember that they made an effort to have the contract carried out in that way, but for some reason it was not allowed. There may have been some good reason why the government did not permit the Canadian Pacific Railway to carry out the contract in the manner which would seem to be best in the interests of the country generally, and if so, I would like to know what it is? As I understand it, both the Allan and the Canadian Pacific Railway people would prefer to have the Canadian Pacific Railway mail steamers sail to and from St. John to Liverpool direct, and that the Allan line steamers sail to and from Liverpool direct to Halifax. There is no doubt that the Canadian Pacific Railway expected they would be able to do that, and they have stated that the service would be more satisfactory and that the mails would get to the Orient with greater expedition if that were done. I cannot understand that any good reason can be given.

### Why That Should Not be Done.

I have seen it stated in the press that the Minister of Trade and Commerce himself thought that was the very best arrangement that could be made. I quote from the St. John Globe of Saturday, November 17, a despatch from Montreal, dated November 16, and which is as follows:

"The facts about the winter arrangement for the transport of Atlantic mails are briefly these: The government entered into a contract with the Allan line for the carriage of the mails; subsequently, when the Canadian Pacific Railway put its two new Empresses into the service, they became a party to an arrangement under an agreement made with the Allan line as sub-contractors. It was quite understood by the parties to this agreement that during the winter months the Empress of Britain and the Empress of Ireland would run between Liverpool and St. John, receiving and delivering the mails at the latter port. Were it not for this understanding the Canadian Pacific Railway would not have participated in the contract, because if these two vessels are to be kept on the Atlantic route they must serve ports reached by the Canadian Pacific Railway lines."

### Influence of Halifax.

Then, this despatch states, that the reason why the steamship companies were not allowed to surrender their share in the mail contract was because of the preponderant influence of Halifax and the article continues:

"The Canadian Pacific Railway was quite willing to surrender its share in the mail contract rather than subject its passengers to the delay and to have the Canadian winter route for passengers seriously prejudiced by this roundabout service."

Of course the reason for that is plain, because we all know that a steamer coming to St. John and calling first at Halifax has to go very considerably out of her course in order to get into Halifax, and in coming out she has to steam from 50 to 75 miles out to sea to clear the coast. In addition to the delay, there is, of course, the increased cost of insurance. So that if speed is considered a necessary element in the delivery of the mails, it is impossible that the proposition of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in that regard should be taken into consideration.

"But this could not be done unless the Allan line could secure the consent of the government. They failed to do so, and therefore the Canadian Pacific in order to observe the terms of the contract with the Allan line, was compelled to accept the situation."

### Second Port of Call.

It goes on to state the delay occasioned by the second port of call, and says:

"Save for this call at Halifax on their outward and inward voyages, the steamships would confine themselves to St. John, the winter port of the Canadian Pacific, passengers and

freight being shipped and landed there, while the Canadian Pacific Railway overseas limited, carrying the imperial mails to and from China, would also make St. John its winter terminal. While beyond doubt the arrangement is detrimental to the general interests of the rest of the Dominion, the only advantage accruing to Halifax is the sentimental prestige of being made a port of call, and thus receiving the local European mails a few hours earlier than if they were carried to St. John."

As far as the accommodation of the rest of Canada is concerned, it would seem from this statement of the Canadian Pacific Railway people that it would be much better for both lines to have each its direct port of call. It would be safer in every way, more speedy for the delivery of mails and passengers, and more satisfactory to both lines in every respect. I bring this matter to the notice of parliament and the government, and I would like the Minister of Finance to tell us why such an arrangement could not be carried out, especially as both lines would prefer it.

### The Finance Minister.

Mr. Fielding—I do not know what understandings may have been between the Canadian Pacific and the Allan, but I know that as far as the government is concerned there has never been any understanding that any of these subsidized mail steamers in the Atlantic service were to set aside the port of Halifax. Halifax from the beginning has been the recognized mail port of Canada, for the ocean service. The Post Office department was satisfied years ago that Halifax was a proper port for that service, and is satisfied of that to-day. Our sister city St. John has undoubted advantages for the freight service by reason of its shorter rail haul from western points; but so far as the mail and passenger services are concerned, I think it hardly admits of doubt that Halifax has the advantage. Ever since the beginning of our independent Canadian line, Halifax has been the acknowledged mail port. Before the construction of the Intercolonial Railway the mail steamers went to Portland. After the opening of the Intercolonial there was an agitation for those vessels to come to a Canadian port, and they after for many years Halifax was the recognized mail port. Another agitation occurred because while the steamers came to Halifax they were not allowed to discharge their freight at a Canadian port, and so the agitation took the form of a demand that the Allan line, being the contractors at that time,

### Should Deal with a Canadian Port.

—not any particular one, but that they should be free to come to any port of Canada for the purpose of loading and receiving freight. St. John has undoubtedly advantages in its connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway, and in its proximity to the centres of traffic in the west, it was chiefly Halifax could not give; but Halifax continued to be as it was from the beginning, the mail port. Therefore there is no change. The arrangement now made is precisely the same as they have been for many years. It is unfortunate perhaps that those two cities down by the sea coast have a certain rivalry, and many say it is a good natured; but I think it will be recognized that each has a certain amount of advantage. Undoubtedly St. John, which has shown a great deal of enterprise in equipping its port, has an advantage in handling the heavier freight, while Halifax has a decided advantage for the mail and passenger services, and every year will emphasize these two facts. But I can answer my hon. friend that it was never contemplated that the mails should be taken away from Halifax.

### Mail and Passenger Port.

Mr. Daniel—I agree that there has never been any doubt that Halifax has always been the mail and passenger port. I know that it is a good port. The people of St. John have no feeling against Halifax at all. We would be glad to see Halifax grow and increase beyond the dreams of its people; but this is a matter more in the nature of an experiment and it places both ports exactly on the same footing, one line going to one port and the other line going to the other, so that there is no discrimination at all. I merely bring it to the attention of the government because it would appear to me a good way to test the best method of delivering the Canadian mails coming from the old country. It is not that we in St. John are anxious to get a little business that is going somewhere else; it is merely to get the most rapid and most satisfactory service. If it cannot be done, of course, there is an end of it; but it would seem that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company themselves think that they could give the country a better service by doing that, not only on account of having but one port to call, but by doing away with the risks of a coasting voyage to a certain extent in the winter time, and by doing away with

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