

mentations that Senator Robert B. Dickey of Amherst, Nova Scotia, declared, and I quote:

This great work is now removed from the category of provincial questions and has become a dominion necessity.

It looked as though the undertaking would be gone ahead with immediately, but other factors intervened. Canada was engaged in reciprocity negotiations with the United States, and the enlargement of Canada's waterway system entered into the discussion. This led to the necessity for making an extensive survey of all canal projects. In 1870 a royal commission, headed by Sir Hugh Allan, was established to carry this out. The Allan commission's report divided its recommendations into works of first, second, third and fourth classes. The first class embraced, and I quote:

all those works.....which.....for the general interest of the dominion should be undertaken and proceeded with as fast as the means at the disposal of the government will warrant.

The Chignecto canal was placed in this category. Included in the works of the first class recommended by the Allan commission and their estimated costs were:

The Sault Ste. Marie canal, \$550,000; The enlargement of the Welland canal, \$6,550,000; The Laurier canal—Ottawa, \$1,800,000; The Chambly canal, \$1,500,000; The deepening of the river St. Lawrence between Quebec and Montreal, \$800,000; The Baie Verte or Chignecto canal with a minimum draft of 15 feet, \$3,250,000; The St. Lawrence canals, \$4,500,000; Deepening the upper St. Lawrence river, \$220,000.

With the exception of the Baie Verte or Chignecto canal, all the canals in the first class have now been built. No explanation satisfactory to the people of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick has ever been given as to why the Baie Verte canal has not been constructed.

However, things went so favourably that the government of the day, under Prime Minister Macdonald, called for tenders for the canal's construction but behind the scenes violent disputes had arisen between the departmental engineers on one hand, and the engineering experts of the Allan commission on the other. This dissension continued until 1873 and it is clear from a speech delivered in the House of Commons by Sir Charles Tupper, who later became prime minister of Canada, that prejudices and jealousies arising from frustrated personal ambitions had much to do with the obstructive delays which held back the work on the canal.

Canada's second government, that of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, twice included money for the Chignecto canal in the federal estimates, but in the meantime the great depression of the 1870's overwhelmed the

country. With financial catastrophe on every side the Mackenzie government appointed another royal commission to go into the question of the Chignecto canal.

Little was heard again of the Chignecto canal until the late 1920's. In that decade, when the rest of the country was attaining new peaks of prosperity, it became alarmingly clear that something was wrong with the Atlantic region. In parliament the maritime representatives once more demanded the Chignecto canal. A royal commission was appointed by the Mackenzie King government in June, 1930, and instructed to inquire into the project in the light of new conditions. Before this commission met the Mackenzie King government was defeated at the polls. The incoming R. B. Bennett ministry, after a delay of one year, named its own commission.

There is a striking parallel between the conditions under which this commission held its hearings and those which formed the background for the Young commission in 1873. Again the world was in the throes of a great depression, a depression recognized as one of the worst in history. Again the government's policy was one of retrenchment, of reducing administration spending and avoiding further financial commitments.

Construction of the Chignecto canal was a definite pledge made prior to confederation in 1867 to the three maritime provinces by the representatives of Ontario and Quebec. In the years following confederation parliament was repeatedly reminded by those who had been delegates to the pre-confederation conferences at Quebec and London that, in the words of Senator Amos E. Botsford of New Brunswick, that the Chignecto canal, and I quote:

... was held out by the Quebec conference as an inducement to New Brunswick to go for confederation.

Senator Robert B. Dickey of Nova Scotia declared that "it was distinctly understood there that this canal should be constructed".

John Burpee, member of parliament for Sunbury, New Brunswick, declared that if the people of New Brunswick had not been satisfied that the canal would be built they would never have consented to the union.

Senator R. D. Wilmot, of New Brunswick, asserted that the canal had been discussed at the London conference of 1866. It was the understanding of the delegates that it would be one of the first public works undertaken.

These and similar confirmatory statements were made in the presence and hearing of other parliamentarians who attended the pre-confederation conferences. They were made