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[x]

1891--JULY--1891.

[o]

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WM. C. WARD,
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june16—dy 3m

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JOHN BAKER EDWARDS, Ph. D., F. C. S.,
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Lounges, Easy Chairs, Rattan Chairs, Feather, Hair, Flock and Wool Beds, Mattresses, Pillows, etc.

Gilt Moulding, every style, cheap. Call and examine.

JOHN NEWSON.

Charlottetown, June 4, 1891.

THE TUNNEL QUESTION

Able and Convincing Speech by Mr. John McLean, M.P.

What the Island Contributes to Canada.

What the Tunnel Will Cost.

THE RELATIVE AMOUNT

contributed to the general revenue and raised by the Island has been brought up in connection with this question of a tunnel. The people of the Island have not complained that they are paying more than their share to the revenue. That is not why I point out that the Island contributes as much per head as do the other provinces, but whenever this question is brought up and it is alleged that the Island is a beggar and contributes $600,000 less to the Dominion treasury than she receives, it is desirable to point out that this is not only wildly inaccurate, but that if true it would be no reason why the terms of Confederation should not be fulfilled. That is the reason I bring it up. In 1886 a statement showing the amount contributed by the Island was prepared by Messrs. Sullivan and Ferguson, who were appointed a delegation from the Provincial Government on a question of winter communication, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. This statement shows the amount contributed by the Island, and I cannot do better than read it to the House. After the speech delivered by the hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) who put the case very clearly from the Island standpoint and very moderately, I was quite willing to leave the question as it was then submitted to the House, although I might have supplemented his remarks by adding a few figures which I thought he had omitted. The statement to which I refer says:

"The difficulty of arriving at an absolutely correct calculation of the amount of dutiable goods which the people of Prince Edward consume cannot fail to be appreciated, yet the undersigned submit that there are several methods by which it may fairly be estimated. It must be premised that the people of the Island are very large consumers of dutiable goods, for he reason that, being chiefly engaged in agriculture and fishing, their manufactures are very small as compared with the rest of Canada, valuing, according to the last census returns, only $31.33 per head to $72.63 per head of the other provinces.

"In proof of the assertion that the people of the Island are principally engaged in agriculture and fishing, the undersigned would again advert to the census returns of 1881, which show that (the North-West Territories not being included)—

"One-half the area of Prince Edward Island is cultivated.

Only one twenty-fifth of the other provinces is cultivated.

"Prince Edward Island has a population of fifty-one to the square mile.

"The other provinces only 4.72.

"Prince Edward Island owns 55 animals of live stock for every 100 acres of improved land.

"The other provinces only 38.

"In field products, Prince Edward Island raises to the acre of improved land 108¾ bushels.

"The other provinces only 61¼ bushels.

"From the fisheries, Prince Edward Island produces $17.08 per head value.

"The other provinces $3.55.

"The people of the Island are generally in comfortable circumstances, in proof of which may be adduced the amount of deposits per head in the Savings Banks, which averages $16.59 for the Island against 7.66 for the rest of the Dominion.

"These figures clearly prove that the people of Prince Edward Island, from the fact of their not being extensive manufacturers, are under the necessity of using imported goods to a large extent, while the fertility of their soil, the value of their fisheries, and their general independence, demonstrate their ability to purchase. This being understood, the undersigned submit the following calculations, designed to show that the imports of dutiable goods into the Island are very much larger than suggested by the Committee of Council, and consequently the contributions to the revenue proportionately greater."

They take three methods of arriving at the amount that is paid into the general treasury by the people of Prince Edward Island. The first method takes the average revenue of the Dominion: They say:

METHOD 1.

The average revenue of the Dominion from customs and excise, for the three years ended 30th June, 1884, was $27,603,479. The population of Prince Edward Island to that of the whole Dominion is in the proportion of 1 to 39.7. Upon this ratio, the Island's share of the customs and excise revenue would amount to $695,301.

METHOD 2.

In 1872, the year before its admission into the Union, Prince Edward Island imported directly from countries beyond Canada good value at....	$1,372,581	
The duty on which amounted to.....		$184,227
And from Canada, goods the growth and manufacture of other countries, valued approximately at	428,354	
The duty on which amounted to.....		89,168
	$1,801.935	$273,395

That was according to the duties levied before Confederation, which were only 11 per cent. There was, I believe, a duty of 2½ per cent. on account of the railway being built, but as there was a large free list the average duty did not amount to 13 per cent. They go on to say:

"It will surely not be argued that in thirteen years, with a large increase in population, the Island's imports from countries outside the Dominion have decreased from $1,801,935 to $822,966, or over 45 per cent., yet this would appear to be the contention of the Committee of Council.

"In 1861 the imports of the Island amounted to $1,021 669; in 1872 they had increased to $2,439,064, or at the rate of 138.7 per cent. At the same rate, its imports from countries beyond the Dominion should have increased from $1,801,935 in 1872 to $4,304,824 in 1884, which, at the present average tariff (free and dutiable combined) of 18.64 per cent., would give a customs revenue of $802,419.

"METHOD 3.

"It is a well established principle that the imports and exports of a country bear a reasonable relation to each other. The imports of the Island for the ten years preceding Confederation aggregated in value £3,543,147 sterling. The exports in the same period, £2,559,091 sterling, showing that the imports exceeded the exports by about £100,000 sterling, or $500,000 annually. The imports of the Dominion for the last seventeen years aggregated in value $1,732,983,486; the exports in the same period, $1,390,946,803, showing that the imports exceeded the exports by about $20,000,000 annually, or in the same proportion, according to population, as the imports of Prince Edward Island exceeded the exports in the years already quoted.

"The exports of the Island have steadily increased during the last twenty five years. In 1861 it exported to all countries goods valued at $793,810, which had increased in 1872 to $1,497,058, or at the rate of 88 3-5 per cent.

"In 1872, the Island exported to countries beyond the Dominion goods valued at $722,333, which had increased in 1884 to $1,310,039, or at the rate of 81 1-3 per cent.

"Apply this rate of increase to the Island's imports from countries beyond the Dominion in 1872, and we have as a result for 1884, imports valued at $3,267,509.

"But the figures contained in the Dominion Trade and Navigation Returns do not represent the total exports of the Island to countries beyond the Dominion, inasmuch as a considerable proportion, being shipped through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick territory, is credited to the exports of those provinces. The annual export of horses from the Island to the United States is not less than 1,500, valued at $150,000. The Dominion returns for 1883-84 credit the Island with only 256, valued at $27,486. This is but an instance of many. A conriderable part of the large trade which the Island does in eggs with the United States is credited to New Brunswick, while fish and potatoes, which are largely exported to Newfoundland, St. Pierre and the West Indies, are, much of them, credited to Nova Scotia, being shipped by way of Halifax. In view of these facts, it would be within the mark to estimate, as indeed the Committee of Council admit, that the Island's foreign export trade has doubled since 1872. Apply the same rate of increase to its imports from the countries beyond the Dominion, as they stood in 1872, and we have, as a result, for 1884, imports valued at $3,603,371, yielding under an 18 64-100 per cent. tariff, an annual revenue of $671,668.

"The exports of Prince Edward Island, since Confederation, have increased in a much larger ratio than have done those of the Dominion, as the following figures will show:

"The total exports of the Dominion for 1871-72 were $82,629,683; for 1883-84, exclusive of the Island, $90,096,437, or an increase of only 9 1-42 per cent., as against 100 per cent. by which the Island's exports have increased in the same time.

"To recapitulate the results of the various methods:—

"Method 1.....	$695,301
"Method 2.....	802,419
"Method 3.....	671,668
"Average annual contribution by the Island from Customs and Excise...	723,129

Mr. Speaker, I wish to show the House that by the three methods which they adopted, the total results they bring out are so nearly alike that I think none of them can be very far astray and that they can be admitted by this House as being as nearly correct as it is possible to get them. The first method of calculation gives a revenue of $695,301, the second $802,419, and the third method $671,668, and if we strike an average it gives us a total of $723,129 that Prince Edward Island contributes in duty and excise. You all remember that the hon. gentleman from Toronto (Mr. Cockburn) leaving the amount of Customs and Excise out altogether, gave us credit for $200,000 received from various sources, and if we add that other amount, $723,000, we have a total of over $900,000 contributed by Prince Edward Island. I claim that this is far nearer the mark, and more in accordance with the returns given in the blue books, than the amount mentioned by the hon. member for Centre Toronto (Mr. Cockburn). If I were to

CARRY OUT THE CALCULATIONS

and take the ten years before we went into Confederation I could show that from 1862 to 1872, and from 1872 to 1882 and from 1882 to 1891 there was such an increase of the goods imported by Prince Edward Island, that we would have imports amounting to $4,756,000, and the duty at the rate we paid last year would be $1,008,937. I do not claim that these figures are correct, because we all know that Prince Edward Island purchases more goods of the manufacture of the Dominion of Canada since we went into Confederation than we did before. But because the hon. member for Centre Toronto did not find that Prince Edward Island did not pay any duty on sugar in the years I have quoted, it is not fair to say that the people of Prince Edward Island did not consume any sugar in those years. Nor was it fair on his part to say that because he found that Prince Edward Island paid very little excise duty on tobacco, there being only two factories on the Island, therefore the people of Prince Edward Island do not consume any tobacco. I believe that the people of Prince Edward Island consumed a portion of the liquor manufactured in Toronto; but because the hon. gentleman found that there were no distilleries on Prince Edward Island it was unfair to claim that Prince Edward Island did not consume any spirits or malt liquors at all. It is eighteen years to-day since Prince Edward Island entered Confederation, whether for good or for evil. The people of that Island have never complained of the amount they have had to pay; but they do complain that the Dominion has not carried out the

PLEDGES MADE TO PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

at that time with regard to winter communication. Whatever else the members of this House may disagree upon, they will agree that the terms of Confederation, so far as Prince Edward Island is concerned, have not been carried out. That is the grievance of the people of the Island, and they resent the imputation that they have not contributed their share to the general revenue. They have paid all they have been asked to pay; they have contributed all that the contract made with them at Confederation called on them to contribute; and they ask in return that this great Dominion shall carry out the pledges it made to Prince Edward Island at that time. This is the question before the House at the present time. But for the speech of the hon. member for Centre Toronto, I would not have troubled the House with the array of figures which I have read to-night; but I think I am only doing my duty to the people who sent me here in resenting any imputation that the people of Prince Edward Island do not consume as many goods per head as the people of the rest of the Dominion. They do not, it is true, import as much from abroad as they did before the Confederation; but I am satisfied that if the hon. member for Cenre Toronto enquired among the merchants of Toronto, he would find that a great many of the goods imported there from Greta Britain and the United States, find their way soon afterwards to the Maritime Provinces. Mr. Speaker, a tunnel is believed by the people of Prince Edward Island, and by a good many people outside of that province, to be the only means by which the terms of Confederation can be properly carried out. In the memoradum submitted a few days ago by the hon. Minister of Finance, we find that world-renowned engineers have pronounced the construction of a tunnel under the Straits of Northumberland to be feasible. There are three estimates made of the cost of the work—one a little over $5,000,000, one about $8,000,000, and one about $11,000,000. I do not think, with the information before the House at the present time, that I could take it upon myself to say which of these tunnels the Government should give to the people of Prince Edward Island. I claim that in constructing this tunnel the Government would not be giving it to the people of Prince Edward Island alone. The trade done with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is of as much service to the people of these provinces as to the people of Prince Edward Island. In equalizing the prices of farm products alone, it would have a beneficial effect on Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. But to the people of Prince Edward Island it would be the means of giving a market, and extending the time during which that market would be available. Now, I say that both parties in this House are pledged to give Prince Edward Island efficient communication, summer and winter, if it is found possible to do it within a reasonable amount; so that the only question for the House to consider is whether the amount necessary for the construction of a tunnel is a reasonable amount.

[CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT]

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