

CHAPTER XI

THE PROBLEMS OF THE WAR

The Great War took care of the crowds. Overnight they melted away and a fairly healthy revenue balance became a worrying deficit. The war in general and the boom across the Clyde from Cloch Point to Dunoon in particular resulted in a dramatic and drastic reduction in the volume of commercial traffic using the harbour. A joint approach to the Government by the Trustees and the proprietors of Innellan Pier and the Arran Piers for a grant to compensate for the loss of revenue did not bear fruit.

In April 1916 the opinion of Mr. H. P. Macmillan, Advocate, was taken as to whether the serious decrease in revenue constituted an extraordinary claim or demand which would entitle the Trustees to use the Contingency Fund which had been established under section 27 of the 1898 Order, and if not, whether the deficits on each year's revenue account could be accumulated till after the War.

Mr. Macmillan was quite certain that the deficit was not a competent charge against the Contingency Fund and was equally certain additional borrowing by the Trustees simply to meet the deficit would be illegal. Mr. Macmillan stated: "If their revenue is insufficient for the purposes of their undertaking, their duty is, on the one hand, to cut down their expenditure as far as possible and, on the other hand, to utilise any means of raising additional revenue which Parliament has placed at their disposal. In my view the alternatives before them are either to endeavour to raise additional revenue by exercising their hitherto unutilised powers of exacting dues from passengers and/or goods, or to default in paying interest and instalments on their borrowed capital leaving the lenders to resort to such remedy as they may be advised to adopt. If the lenders merely lay by that would of course result in the liability being accumulated . . . in the form of arrears. But I do not think that it would be legitimate to allow arrears so to accumulate while the memorialists' power of raising further revenue were allowed to lie unexercised. The lenders could reasonably object to this.

Upon the whole, therefore, my advice to the memorialists as the safest course is to put in force now their optional powers, exacting rates in respect of goods and persons referred to in section 16 of the Order of 1898."

The Trustees accordingly resolved to levy dues on passengers at the rate of 1d. per person.

The need for the dues was however obviated till the end of the year by a very handsome gift of £1,500 from Mr. Adam D. Macbeth who had been a member of the Trust for 15 years. When this money was exhausted dues on passengers once again became a necessity. Turnstiles were erected and from 2nd April 1917 1d. was levied on each passenger over the age of 12 landing on or embarking from the pier. From 1st May 1925 dues were restricted to passengers embarking from the pier. Dues are still levied on steamer passengers but from 10th September 1973 the pier has been free to casual users.