

empty. But is not this difficulty somewhat exaggerated? Does it not actually exist, under the present method, almost to the same extent? A large number of cars have to be employed in this traffic between the wheat fields and Fort William. But a very great number have also to be employed between the Georgian Bay and Port Colborne elevators and the seaports of Canada and the United States. And both sets of cars are subject to the extra delays incident to the double elevating at Fort William and Georgian Bay, and are equally subject to having small return loads.

By the railway tariffs now in force, we understand that, it costs 32 cents per bushel to carry wheat from Winnipeg via Fort William and the lake route and Buffalo, to New York; also, that it costs 36 cents, all rail, from Winnipeg to Quebec. The Quebec Board of Trade have a report from its Transportation Committee, details of which are hereto annexed, stating that it should be possible to carry wheat, all rail, over the Transcontinental Railway, 1,350 miles, from Winnipeg to Quebec, with a margin of profit, and after providing for the cost of hauling back three-fourths of the cars empty, for about 17 cents per bushel. And the possibility of this would seem to be proved by the fact that, some years ago, export wheat was hauled from Parry Sound to Quebec, 550 miles, for 5 cents per bushel, and by the fact that the present tariffs cover a rate of 12½ cents from Goderich to Halifax, a distance of 1,305 miles, over roads having one per cent grades, as compared with four-tenths grades on the Transcontinental.

Even if it should be proved that 17 cents is too low a figure to allow a reasonable profit to the other railways, owing to their grades and longer mileage, would it not be wise for the Government to make a special case for the carrying of wheat over the Government railways to Canadian seaports? The margin between 17 cents and the 32 cents which it is now costing the farmer of Manitoba to send his wheat to New York is a very large one. And if a low rate of freight were made, even upon export wheat alone, it would be a great encouragement for the new settlers to go to the Prairie provinces.

On the line of the Transcontinental Railway, where many people thought there would never be any population, owing to its northerly location, new settlers have been pouring into the Abitibi district, in this province, in such numbers that there are now 15,000 there. These brave pioneers, whose work in clearing homes for themselves in the forest is going to create a chain of settlements between Quebec and Winnipeg, uniting the West to the East, is worthy of all admiration, have made vast quantities of freight for the Government railway in clearing their farms, in the shape of pulp wood and in the sawn lumber made at the numerous saw mills they have established which have a capacity of sixty million feet. They complain of the freight rates charged by the railway, which they say amount to about \$10 per cord on their pulp wood from Abitibi to Three Rivers and to about \$9 per cord from Abitibi to La Tuque. As the wood is only worth about \$16 per cord when delivered at La Tuque, it will be seen how little is left for the poor settler for his labour and material. We would ask you to consider whether it would not be possible to reduce these freight rates.

To sum up, the Quebec Board of Trade would respectfully request that the Railway Commission will be pleased to enact:—

1. That a special rate of freight be immediately put into force upon export wheat over the Transcontinental Railway by the Government, from Winnipeg to Quebec, at least three cents per bushel cheaper than the rail and lake rate from Winnipeg to New York, so as to endeavour to put a stop to the alarming diversion of our western trade to New York. We would suggest that the rate should not exceed 20 cents per bushel to Quebec with proportionate rates to Halifax and St. John, and that it should be freely advertised in the Northwest.

2. That special rates should be made on the carriage of pulp wood over the Transcontinental Railway from the Abitibi district, consistent with a fair profit to the railway.