

HON. MR. FIELDING: Of course if you had built the railway yourself you would have had the right to control it.

MR. McGEER: Absolutely.

HON. MR. FIELDING: But could the province of British Columbia have undertaken at that time to build that road out of her own resources? You might have had to wait for many years.

MR. McGEER: Probably we would have been infinitely better off to have waited many years rather than to have taken a transcontinental road which would raise a barrier to trade between the Pacific coast and the prairies for all eternity. But what we say, Mr. Fielding, in connection with that is that whatever we were to pay for the road was set out in the agreement, and we having paid that, is it fair that besides doing that, besides making these huge land grants, we should be obliged to pay an excessive toll which is a barrier to trade? If there is to be that excessive toll charged, should there not be some specific part of the agreement giving the right to the railway to charge that excessive toll?

HON. MR. FIELDING: I suppose there would be a difference of opinion on the question whether or not there is excessive toll. "Excessive toll" is capable of different interpretations. Was the expression used that rates were to be uniform?

MR. McGEER: No.

HON. MR. GRAHAM: There was to be no discrimination in this sense; that one man could not go to the railway and get cheaper terms than another could.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Just one further point. You have gone very fully into the discussions that took place at the time this agreement was made. Have you not discovered anywhere a reference to the question of rates? Did it not come up somewhere in the discussion?

HON. MR. OLIVER: I have not seen a word in reference to the rates to be charged on the railway.

THE PRIME MINISTER: You do not know why no reference was made to it in the agreement?

HON. MR. OLIVER: There being no reference made, the only possible assumption, Mr. Premier, is that the people relied upon the general railway law as it stood at that time. So far as the written terms of union are concerned, there is not one word there which says that this railway is to be constructed by a company. If you compare the wording of section 11 of the terms of union with the section in the British North America Act referring to the Intercolonial railway you will find that the Intercolonial Railway and the railway described in the terms of union with British Columbia are on an absolute parity; they are both exactly in the same position so far as the written word is concerned?

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