

Hon. Mr. GORDON: I am not familiar with railway rates in the United States, but I have heard it stated here and elsewhere that on the whole our rates on wheat are lower than the corresponding American rates.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: But most people forget this fact, that our short-haul rates are higher than rates of a similar class in the United States. Yet I have no fault to find with those higher rates, in view of the unfortunate position in which we are placed with respect to our railroads.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: I may tell my honourable friend that in Western Canada you can ship three carloads of freight at the same charge as you would have to pay for only two carloads in the United States.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: What product?

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Wheat.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: I agree with my honourable friend that grain rates are lower in Western Canada than in corresponding territory in the United States.

Hon. W. M. ASELTINE: Honourable members, as I also am a senator from Western Canada, I rather hesitate to take part in this debate, but I desire to make a few remarks, particularly with respect to what was said by the honourable senator from Lethbridge (Hon. Mr. Buchanan). If I heard him correctly, he said he would vote against this Bill if he thought that by its enactment rates on the Great Lakes would be raised. It is my opinion, after studying the evidence taken before the Railway Committee, that the rates on the Great Lakes will be raised if this Bill becomes law. The representatives of the steamship companies said, in effect, that they could not exist on the present rates. The inference is inescapable. The other honourable members from the West who have spoken have also expressed the view that the purpose of the Bill is to raise rates substantially. An increase of three cents a bushel on the rate on wheat would mean to me a tax of probably \$1,000 a year. In other words, my wheat would be that much lower in price, f.o.b. Rosetown.

Hon. Mr. KING: Is it not a fact that in the West wheat is sold at a price based on Fort William, or Vancouver or Churchill?

Hon. Mr. ASELTINE: That is correct, but one of the items entering into the price is the freight rate on the Great Lakes.

Hon. Mr. KING: But the price quoted is based on Fort William, or Vancouver, or Churchill?

Hon. Mr. McRAE: Is it not based on the Liverpool price, with cost of freight deducted?

Hon. Mr. ASELTINE: Yes, with all costs to the point of shipment deducted. Therefore any increase in the freight rates would mean so much less in the price I should receive for my wheat, f.o.b. Rosetown.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: The honourable gentleman assumes that the freight rate on wheat on the Great Lakes would be increased?

Hon. Mr. ASELTINE: Yes.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: That is his theory?

Hon. Mr. ASELTINE: Yes. I take it from the evidence that unless the rates were increased the large shipping companies would be forced into bankruptcy.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: That is not the theory of the honourable Minister who sponsors the Bill.

Hon. Mr. ASELTINE: I am not referring to the honourable Minister's evidence before the Railway Committee. I should like to know where are the supporters of this Bill. I have not heard a single honourable member openly support it. The honourable member from Parkdale (Hon. Mr. Murdock) did not state definitely whether he was in favour of the measure or not. The honourable senator from Lethbridge (Hon. Mr. Buchanan) was similarly indefinite. This Bill seems to be an orphan, and for a while I was afraid we might have to make application under the Child Welfare Act to find its putative father.

I hope we shall hear from those honourable members who are in favour of the Bill. In my opinion the measure has been hastily conceived, without due consideration being given to all the surrounding factors. The preponderance of the evidence, as I heard it, is absolutely against the Bill. As a judicial body we should consider that evidence, and if it is preponderantly adverse, we should not pass the motion for third reading. I agree for the most part with what has been said by other honourable members from the West, and I would suggest that the Government withdraw the Bill.

On motion of Hon. Mr. McRae, the debate was adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until to-morrow at 3 p.m.