

no one in admiration to what is, perhaps, the best equipped set of men in the railway service—the traffic managers—it must be admitted that there has not been much technique in their practice of the art of rate-making in the past. They have seldom based their rates on principle. . . .

"Hereafter, under government regulation, the rate-maker must base his work upon principle, and, while probably he can never, under our American conditions, create a strict science of rate-making, he can promote the art into a profession. A profession is the practice of individual initiative under established rules. The lawyer shapes and weaves the settled rules of the law to meet new facts and conditions under the regulation of the courts. The surgeon adjusts his every operation to the sudden emergency, but always within the limitation of the binding etiquette of his profession. Both can always cite a principle for everything they do; and it is in this that a profession differs from an art. The great painter is little bound by rules and philosophy; the musician even less; their individual genius flowers differently in every generation. The nightingale cannot tell why he gushes melody.

"It is possible that the rate-maker in the past has modelled himself more on the nightingale than on the lawyer and the doctor, but the necessity of constantly justifying his rates upon the witness stand is forcing the traffic office to study, for example, the cost of service as an element of the basis for a rate."

High Time to Let Daylight In

The fact of the matter is that it is high time that a thorough investigation was begun of the huge and complicated problem of railway rates throughout Canada, with a view to determining the just and equitable basis for each class of rates, and the principles upon which traffic tariff should be framed in justice both to the public and to the railways. Such an investigation will be an immense undertaking, requiring men of special ability and experience, and it will be necessary that Parliament shall place at their disposal every possible means of securing the information necessary in their work of investigation and analysis and getting down to fundamentals and preparing for the use of the Railway Commission the basic facts and principles upon which traffic rate schedules should be framed. The time is past when high railway officials could pretend that the framing of rate schedules was a deep and intricate mystery, not to be understood or rashly meddled with by anybody save themselves. As the Railway Commission of the State of Wisconsin has declared in a notable judgment, the cost of transporting any commodity over any mileage, can be determined as accurately as the United States Steel Company determines the cost of a bar of iron, or a screw. The cost of the service is one of the factors which should rightly enter the determination of any rate; there are other factors, and until all the factors are rightly determined, railway rates cannot be arranged on the right basis.