

would not like it to shift its responsibility to any board or any other party, until the agreement is carried out. We are very sensitive on this subject and we look forward to becoming a real part of the Intercolonial system some day. I therefore ask the Minister of Railways, and the committee, not to put the Prince Edward Island railway under the direction of this board until the terms of Confederation are carried out; that is, until the Government completes the system it has commenced. I do not think this is an unreasonable request, and I hope the minister will agree to it, and that the Government will retain the control and operation of the Prince Edward Island railway in its own hands until we are put in continuous communication with the Intercolonial railway and the railway system of the Dominion. Until that is done I hope that at no time will we be obliged to look to any other body for redress.

Mr. COCHRANE: My hon. friend from Kings, Prince Edward Island (Mr. J. J. Hughes) and several other hon. gentlemen from the lower provinces seem to think that putting the railway under the Railway Board is being done purely for the purpose of raising the rates. This is not the case at all. Before this Bill was introduced the raising of the rates lay with the Government, and the people had no recourse. The Government could raise the rates as it saw fit. Under the Railway Board this cannot be done, unless it is permitted by the board. With reference to the car ferry, and the possibility of shipping produce in refrigerator cars, we certainly have made progress, and as soon as we can get the car ferry repaired we hope to put it into immediate operation. It is very hard to get a vessel repaired now, but we hope to have it running by the first of the month. Then we can take our refrigerator cars over to Prince Edward Island and load them with perishable freight there, which is much better than having to tranship. I do not think the argument put forward by my hon. friend is fair, or one I can accept. I would therefore ask that it be voted down.

Mr. MACDONALD: There is a good deal of reason in the position taken by my hon. friend from Kings, Prince Edward Island, and I second his amendment. We must remember that Prince Edward Island is situated differently from almost any other part of the country. In the first place, it is a purely agricultural province.

[Mr. J. J. Hughes.]

Mr. COCHRANE: But, what harm are we going to do? I object to what my hon. friend from Kings says in regard to the raising of the rates. As a matter of fact, we have the right to raise the rates to any extent we wish.

Mr. MACDONALD: And you did raise them recently. For instance, you raised the rate on coal coming to Montreal.

Mr. COCHRANE: When this Bill goes into effect you will have a chance to appeal against the raise.

Mr. MACDONALD: Prince Edward Island has a population of about 90,000 persons, practically all of whom are engaged in agriculture. They have a narrow-gauge railway, which they built themselves before Confederation, entirely as a local work. They are not connected with the rest of the Dominion except by steamer. Whatever advantages there are in the application of this Act to the other parts of the Intercolonial, they do not apply to Prince Edward Island, because of its entirely different position. My hon. friend from Kings points out that some years ago this Government gave a definite and positive assurance that the Prince Edward Island railway should be widened to standard gauge and that continuous communication between the mainland and the island should be maintained, and he asks that pending the carrying out of these undertakings no other body should be introduced having any control over the operation of their purely local road. I think that proposition is a reasonable one, and I therefore second it.

Mr. J. J. HUGHES: I wish to point out to the minister, what the business men of Prince Edward Island well know, that even although there may be some improvement over present conditions when the car ferry steamer begins to run between Prince Edward Island and the mainland, yet, until the road is standardized, and until standard cars can be used, there will be so much congestion at some points that it will be very difficult to handle all the traffic that offers. Then again the minister says that refrigerator cars can go over the Prince Edward Island railway just across the Straits. They can, but unless you have refrigeration from the shipping point to the consuming point, it will be no good. You would have to ship in these small cars