

ness than ever before—in fact, that they had more than they could handle. Therefore they should be making more money, notwithstanding the great cost of everything. Would he explain why they need assistance when they are doing more business than they can take care of?

Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON: They are doing more business, but the cost of doing that business has increased very considerably; in other words, they are not doing business at a profit, as they have been for years.

In the past the coal supply in Ontario has been taken care of largely by means of water transportation. During the summer months freight by water is very much cheaper than by rail. Fort William receives its coal from lake Erie at the very low rate of 30 cents a ton, and, strange to say, although every other rate went up last year, this old rate of 30 cents a ton was maintained almost until the end of the season; while tonnage from ports on lake Superior to lake Erie ports was \$1 a ton for ore, and 4½ to 5 cents a bushel for grain. Owing to the shortage of cars in the United States and to the great demand for coal, the coal supply at the Lake Erie shipboard was not as good as usual. Steamers had to delay two or three days, waiting for a cargo; therefore they would go up light and sacrifice the cargo of coal; consequently the coal supply was lessened. Coming to Eastern Ontario was a class of ship that we call full-sized canal boats; they carry somewhere about 2,700 or 3,000 tons, and owing to the very high freight rate on the Atlantic ocean, any of these boats that were fit for sea service went into the ocean trade. Transportation through the Welland canal to Ontario and Montreal was greatly reduced; there was no tonnage to carry it, although rates went up from \$1 a ton to Montreal to as high as \$2.50. Taking it altogether, the situation is a result of the war, the wonderful demand, and the increased production of the factories, which are operating twenty-four hours a day, instead of eight. The only solution I see is for the Railway Board to order the railroads to buy coal, and give them a sufficient advance in rates to compensate them for the increased cost.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN: Evidently the honourable gentleman is an expert in the railway business. Before he takes his seat, will he please state to the House and to the country what amount of dividends and bonuses were paid by the various railroad

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN.

systems in Canada during the past year? That would be of more consequence to the people and to the Senate than any statements about coal shortage. I would like him, if he is able to do so, to tell us the amount of dividends paid by the various railroad companies.

Hon. Mr. SPROULE: No answer.

Hon. Mr. CLORAN: No answer. That means there has been too much paid.

Hon. Mr. SPROULE: I think there is a good deal in the statement of one honourable senator, who said that the railways appeared to be working overtime this last year and that their earning powers were very much increased. I know, after looking over the statement of the earnings of the Canadian Northern Railway, that there is a great improvement on last year; evidently they have done much better, and I presume that a like condition will be found in the finances of the Canadian Pacific railroad and other railroads. But, notwithstanding that, it may be, as the hon. senator (Hon. Mr. Richardson) has said, that their freight rate is still too low to pay. However, the suggestion of the hon. senator that they be authorized to go on and contract to carry at a rate that will pay I do not understand. Of course, this House has no authority to do that. I merely wish to refer to the fact that we have a Railway Commission whose special duty it is to look into freight rates, upon the complaint that they are either too high or too low, and I would suggest that it would be the part of wisdom, if anything is done, that it be done through that Commission. The Railway Commission can have but one object: that is, to do whatever is fair, and, if it is clearly established to their satisfaction that the rate is too low, and they so represent to the Government and to the country, I am quite sure it would then be an easy matter to give the railway companies the power to impose a higher rate. But until that is done I think we should be acting rather prematurely, or in the dark, if we were to make any special deliverance here with reference to what the railway companies should do.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL: I know that the Railway Commission has the power to increase the rate if it is satisfied that the existing rate is too low. Therefore I think that whatever is done ought to be done through the Commission.