

the greatest navy in the world. The navies of the world, I think, should be for the purpose of maintaining peace, law, and order all over the globe, and not for the purpose of rivalling one another as to which is the greatest power and can put the largest number of ships in any part of the world at a given time.

I mentioned the question of omissions from the Speech from the Throne. One that I think is affecting the country very severely to-day, one on which the country would almost have expected the Government to make some pronouncement as to what they intended to do, is the question of freight rates on the railways. As honourable gentlemen will remember, towards the end of last year the railway commission dealt with the question of rates and practically agreed to the rate that the railway companies asked the commission to allow them to charge. The effect of those rates on the trade of the country was very serious. In the province from which I come it immediately caused the cessation of business in the lumbering trade throughout the province. The rates were found to be so high that it did not pay the lumber merchants to ship their lumber. The effect of those rates, if I am credibly informed, has been to change very seriously the course of trade of this country and cause us to do a great deal more business north and south than we formerly did. It stands to reason that, if you raise the rates on the railways to such an extent that it becomes cheaper for the people of the country to pay the duty and import from the south the goods that they wish to buy, this will seriously injure the business of the country and change the course that it has been following for a great number of years. One of the arguments that I have always heard since coming to Canada, regarding the danger of lowering the tariff between ourselves and the United States, was that it would seriously affect the business between east and west and cause business to be done north and south instead. Now, the effect of raising the railway rates to the extent to which they have been raised has been, I think, the same. I think there is no honourable gentleman in this House who will dispute the fact that it has very materially injured every branch of business throughout the country, in handicapping not only the lumbermen, but also the agriculturists and producers generally, if it has not hurt the merchants.

I may be told that it may be necessary to raise these rates in order to enable the rail-

ways to meet their expenses and pay the higher wages that they were called upon to pay when our neighbors to the south dealt with the question of wages and agreed to what was called the McAdoo award. The railway companies of this country, of course, are practically compelled to fall in line with what is done in the United States; consequently we have to suffer to some extent in being compelled to raise railway rates in this country. But I think that the Commission perhaps went too far. I should have hoped that the Government would have announced that the decision of the Commission would be reconsidered at an early date. There is no doubt that it was necessary to raise these rates in order to assist the Government roads, because, as we have seen for a considerable time in the newspapers, the deficit on the Government roads this year is going to be very much greater than it was last year and will be a very heavy burden on the country. I have seen various figures given, showing in one case that the loss on the Government railways will amount to \$60,000,000, in another case \$75,000,000, and I think in another case \$80,000,000. I have myself no definite information as to what will be the amount of the deficit, but I have no doubt that the honourable leader of the Government will be able to enlighten us as to the condition of things, either now or at some later stage of the Session.

The increase in railway rates of course also affected the cost of living, which was beginning to be felt very seriously by people all over the country. The peak of the load of the high cost of living was practically reached by Canada in May of 1920, and from that date on the prices were gradually coming down; but I think we may say that the effect of this increase in railway rates has been to increase to a considerable extent the cost of living to the people throughout the country; and, inasmuch as it has also checked the trade of the country, it has been a very serious drawback to the people of Canada.

The Speech from the Throne deals with another question that I think is a very serious one for this country: it mentions the fact that the Government have decided to do away with the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission was established by Act of Parliament in 1909, with the idea that it should look into the natural resources of Canada and help to educate, not only the people, but also the various Governments and public bodies,