

manager of the Bras d'Or Coal company, Limited, in respect to the rates on the transportation of coal from Sydney to Montreal. The letter is dated July 28, 1917, and reads:

Dear Mr. McKenzie:—

In reply to your favour of July 23rd, the rates from Sydney, North Sydney, Sydney Mines and Little Bras d'Or have been increased to Levis and Carrier Junction from \$2.35 a net ton to \$3.75. These are the points that we are particularly interested in, but there has been a general increase in the rates of about proportionate to these increases from North Sydney to all points west of Mont Joli. Under Government supervision in the United States, the railways have been permitted to increase the rate by 15 cents a gross ton, and you can see that the Canadian Government rate has been increased by \$1.40 a net ton.

Thanking you for your interest in this matter, I remain

Yours very truly,

Geo. B. Burchell.

The people in that part of the country are very much concerned about this large increase in the rates. I hope that the minister will be able to go back to the old rate.

Mr. COCHRANE: It is well known that the old coal rate was exceedingly low; it was put into effect when our traffic was largely to the east, enabling us to bring back our cars loaded. But the situation has changed; practically all our loading is now west, and if we did very much coal business it would be necessary for us to bring down empty cars for it. The rate that my hon. friend has mentioned is less than one half cent per ton per mile, which is as low a rate as obtains in the United States. It is one thousand miles from Sydney to Montreal and one-half cent per ton would bring the rate up to a good deal more than the rate my hon. friend mentioned. It is only in proportion that we have raised the rate to Quebec city and other places in Quebec province. Having regard to the tremendous increase we have had to make in the pay of our men, and to the increased amount we are paying the coal producers for coal, certainly we are justified in increasing our rates.

PROPOSED NEW PENSIONS ACT.

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. E. M. MACDONALD (Pictou): When does the Finance Minister purpose going on with the new Pensions Act? Many cases have come under the observation of hon. members in respect to which amendments ought to be made.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: The matter is very important and, as my hon. friend

knows, somewhat complicated. It has received a good deal of attention. I am not in a position to make a definite statement to-day, but I shall do so later.

THE CANADIAN RAILWAY SITUATION.

FIRST READING OF BILL RESPECTING THE CANADIAN NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Sir THOMAS WHITE (Minister of Finance) moved the second reading of a certain proposed resolution in respect to the acquisition by His Majesty of certain shares and capital stock of the Canadian Northern Railway company not now held by the Minister of Finance in trust for His Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and resolution read the second time.

Sir THOMAS WHITE thereupon moved to introduce Bill No. 125, providing for the acquisition by His Majesty of the capital stock of the Canadian Northern Railway company.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

NUMBER OF JURORS IN PANEL.

Hon. C. J. DOHERTY (Minister of Justice) moved the second reading of Bill No. 97, to amend the Criminal Code respecting jurors.

Hon. WILLIAM PUGSLEY (St. John City): I am surprised that in moving the second reading of a Bill proposing such a drastic change in the administration of the criminal law, the Minister of Justice has not seen fit to give to the House a full explanation, not merely of the provisions of the Bill, but of the reasons for its introduction. It is true that on the first reading he stated the object of the Bill. But he ought to go much further than that; he ought to show to the House the reasons why this Bill should be passed.

I have had much to do with the administration of criminal law in my own province during a period of thirty-five years, and I have never heard the slightest expression of dissatisfaction with the law as it exists. It is absolutely essential for the proper, efficient and satisfactory administration of the criminal law that it should be continued on the statute book as it is to-day. If this amendment is adopted and the law is changed in the manner proposed by my hon. friend, in many cases the administration of justice will be paralysed.