

the rates during 1909. I took the figures from the books of grain companies and figured out the average of a whole page of actual shipments, and the average was just a little less than four cents. I believe the hon. member for Fort William (Mr. Manion), who is in favour of opening up the St. Lawrence deep-water ways, claimed on one occasion that a great saving could be made; I think some even talked about a saving of six cents. If we could ever get back to anywhere near the 1909-10 rate, which is less than six cents by a considerable amount, then I think it would be just a question whether any saving could be made by shipping through the West. However, I am convinced that the West can well compete with the East. I am glad to see the proposition and I am prepared to give it my support.

Mr. HOCKEN: There is one feature of this proposal which astonishes me, and that is the unusual modesty of the city of Vancouver. That city is asking for a loan to improve its harbour, and I ask if any Canadian city ever made so modest a request before. There have been millions of money spent on the different harbours of this country by the Dominion government. Large sums of money, for example, have been spent at Fort William making improvements to the harbour, but all that Vancouver wants is a loan. Certainly, I would support a motion of this kind very gladly. I am of the opinion that most of the troubles of our friends in the West—and I think they seem to have more troubles than all the rest of the population put together—may be remedied by the improvement of marketing conditions; and if, as has been alleged here to-day, a saving of eight cents a bushel can be effected by using the route under discussion then I think it is up to the Canadian government not only to make a loan but to make an appropriation, to reach so desirable an end. I think that every proposition that offers lower rates for the marketing of the produce of the West should be exploited, because it is in the marketing of the products of our land that such a tremendous cost arises and that is the direction in which a reduction can be made. I am not very hopeful of being able to reduce the cost of production, at least for very many years. Because men are not going to work for less money than they are now working for, and there does not seem to be any inclination to do any more work in a specified time. The only way that I can see to relieve the situation of our friends in the western provinces is to devise some plan by which their produce could be marketed at lower rates. I believe that the improvement of the St.

[Mr. Millar.]

Lawrence canals would do a great deal in that connection, and at a later stage I hope to have an opportunity of saying something more definite on that question. What this country ought to do—not only for to-day but for the future—is to improve all its machinery and all its facilities for getting its products out of the country. We are growing a crop of three or four hundred millions of bushels of grain in the West. Why, Sir, if that western country is fully settled there ought to be surely four or five times as much produced as is the case to-day. If, then, the prairie provinces increase their production to that amount the present means of export, as any person can see, will be absolutely insufficient, and with inadequate means of export we are practically limited in our production. The statement has been made that a block existed at Montreal. I am not surprised at that, it is practically the only outlet we have for all the stuff that is grown in the West. I would have two or three outlets, because I think the time is not far away when we will need more facilities than we possess at the present time to handle the produce of Canada. We must remember that it is not only the produce of the West that has to pass out from Montreal, but all that is grown in the great province of Ontario which produces, I suppose, twice as much as any other province in the Dominion. The only existing outlet is either New York or Montreal, a little going, perhaps, to Portland. But my feeling is that it is wise on the part of this government and this parliament to consider carefully and sympathetically every proposal that is made for increasing the facilities for handling the produce of the western prairies. There is no man in this House who is more anxious, or who desires more ardently, to serve the interests of western Canada than I do. In that respect I am practically prepared to go the limit. It is not only wheat for which better

5 p.m. means of export are desired. The cattle industry, especially in the province of Alberta, ought to become a very large and very important one to Canada and particularly to the West.

Now I cannot speak with any definiteness as to the exact saving to be effected in the cost of transportation, not having gone into the matter as deeply as some hon. members, but it seems to me that there must be a substantial reduction in the cost of handling the produce of the West by the Vancouver route when it is remembered that the distance from Edmonton, I think, is only about eight hundred miles as compared with a distance of well on to three thousand miles to Montreal.