

apparently, that men should be considered guilty until they are proven innocent.

There seems to be throughout the whole country to-day a tendency to accuse any men who are in big business of being crooked, just the same as there is a tendency throughout this country to-day to accuse any man who is in politics of being a grafter. It all comes apparently from the same line of thought. It is, apparently, due to a diseased mentality on the part of a great many people that they seem to think that most of the members of this House, of any party are out for graft or crookedness. Well, I might say this now, although I did not intend to, that I have been a member of this House for eight years and never have I heard or seen of any crookedness going on, never have I been offered graft in any shape, manner or form.

As to the lobbying which the Minister of Agriculture spoke of a few moments ago, and which he says is going on at the present time in regard to this contract, I have seen nothing of it and I doubt whether anybody else has; I do not think there is anything in the charge. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that most men, whether they are big business men or small business men, prefer to deal with their fellow beings, with their fellow corporations, in an honest manner. For example would it be fair to assume that the leading men of the great Canadian Pacific Railway—Mr. Beatty, Mr. Grant Hall, Mr. D. C. Coleman, Mr. Lanigan and the others, the chief men of that company—have not the interests of this great Dominion of Canada at heart? Why the Canadian Pacific Railway is as much dependent on the success and prosperity of the Dominion as any individual in this country is dependent upon the success and prosperity of Canada. So that I think the whole attitude that Mr. Preston took in dealing with this investigation—if investigation it can be called, because most of these companies, in a statement that all hon. members have received, claim they never saw or heard from Mr. Preston, so that I doubt if what he did can be called an investigation—is open to suspicion. Anyhow I believe we should regard most of these men as innocent until they are proven guilty.

There is another observation I wish to make, and that is as to the uselessness of the scheme as proposed in this contract. Here we have a proposition to engage from Sir William Petersen ten ships. Now it has been shown here again and again—by statements which have not been refuted and which nobody attempts to refute—that these ten ships could make perhaps 5 per cent of the trips next

year to Montreal if they were all on duty, perhaps 4 per cent. According to figures I have seen there were some 1,200 trips made by various lines of steamships to Montreal last year. The most anybody claims for these ten ships is that they could make fifty or sixty voyages to the port of Montreal. Now what possible effect could fifty or sixty trips have upon the other eleven hundred trips into the port of Montreal? What possible effect could 5 per cent of shipping have upon the other 95 per cent? It appears to me like an attempt to dam back Niagara with a broom. And for these ten ships the people of Canada are asked to put up in round figures \$1,350,000 per annum, and with any increase in the number of ships that subsidy will be increased pro rata; and it has been pointed out by the hon. member for Red Deer, the hon. member for Vancouver Centre, the hon. member for Burrard, and by others, if these ships were used, for example, in the handling of wheat alone they could not handle more than about 13,000,000 bushels out of the 150,000,000 bushels that were shipped from Montreal last year—in other words they could handle about 8 per cent of the wheat shipped from Montreal if they had nothing else but wheat to carry throughout the whole season. What effect would the lowering of the rates on that eight per cent of wheat have on the other ninety-two per cent?

I am not so sure of this fact, but I am informed that if the ships were devoted to the cattle trade alone they would be able to handle only one-half of the cattle leaving the port of Montreal. That I suppose is correct; I do not think I have over-estimated it. But if they could handle only half of the cattle shipped out what would be done to take care of the other half? Are we to subsidize a shipping concern merely for one group, and that a small group, of people doing business in the country? What about the exporters of wheat, the manufacturers, and the other shippers in the country?

It is true that the rates have been increased since 1913; no one disputes that. But everyone admits, as does the hon. member for Brome (Mr. McMaster), that the expenses of the companies have also gone up. That hon. gentleman speaking on the floor of the House of Commons the other day admitted that the expenses of the companies had gone up one hundred per cent. If this is so, the companies have only increased their rates in accordance with the advance that has been made in their expenses, according to the hon. member for Brome. Now, to make this scheme effective at all, there is only one thing