

tinental between Winnipeg and Quebec. When were the rails connected between Quebec and Winnipeg?

Mr. COCHRANE: I will have to get that information; I do not remember.

Mr. OLIVER: What were the rates on grain last winter over the Transcontinental between Winnipeg and Quebec?

Mr. COCHRANE: The same as the year before. The information is in Hansard of last year.

Mr. OLIVER: What were those rates?

Mr. COCHRANE: Six cents a bushel from Armstrong to Quebec.

Mr. OLIVER: What was the approximate amount of grain transported between Winnipeg and Quebec last winter?

Mr. COCHRANE: I do not remember that; I will have to get the information.

Mr. OLIVER: Was the amount considerable?

Mr. COCHRANE: I am not sure.

Mr. OLIVER: Was it equal to the amount transported in the previous year?

Mr. COCHRANE: I do not think it was as great.

Mr. OLIVER: Has the department in contemplation such arrangements as will induce a larger proportion of western wheat to take the Transcontinental route during the coming season?

Mr. COCHRANE: That is pretty hard to say. Wheat is routed by the man sending it. We named a very low rate last year, largely because the elevators were full at Fort William, excepting some on the Canadian Pacific railway, which barred wheat shipped by the Transcontinental. For that reason we established a low rate from Armstrong to the Montreal and Quebec elevators.

Mr. OLIVER: The Transcontinental Railway has been completed for a number of years under the administration of this Government, and we should now know whether it is possible to secure the advantage of the transportation of the western crop over that road. There is no doubt that the excessive manipulation of grain prices during the past spring was a direct result of the failure of the grain to go forward to the Atlantic seaboard during the winter. The grain was held either in the interior elevators or at Fort William, and became the subject of price manipulation,

[Mr. Oliver.]

to the very great detriment of the public. The results of this manipulation were felt particularly by the eastern public who, being in larger numbers, naturally consume more flour than the western public, although both suffered. If there is to be no relief from that condition; if grain is not to go forward all the year round as was intended when the Transcontinental was built, the country will continue to be subject to such dangers of price manipulation as prevailed last winter. Is it contrary to Government policy that the road should be used in that way, or is it a question of impossibility?

Mr. COCHRANE: The Government is not opposed to the shipment of grain or anything else over the Transcontinental. At the close of navigation, shippers object to sending the grain over the Transcontinental to Quebec because of the difficulties in the way of further shipment. Portland, New York and Boston are more easily reached from Montreal than St. John and Halifax from Quebec. We should be very glad to take charge of shipments of grain, particularly in the winter, when very little traffic is moving. Local traffic on the Transcontinental is limited, and will be limited for some time. We shall be glad to get shipments of anything in order to keep the trains moving.

Mr. OLIVER: The minister will appreciate the query that is in the minds of the people of the West in this connection if he makes a comparison between the present summer rate from Port Arthur across the lake—which, I am credibly informed, is seven cents a bushel—

Mr. COCHRANE: That is to Montreal.

Mr. OLIVER: I understand not. I am informed that the rate is applicable from Port Arthur to Buffalo or Midland. To that is added the rail rate from Midland to Montreal or from Buffalo to New York. When we compare that summer rate by lake and rail with the all-rail rate that the department put in the winter before last, and which prevailed again last winter, we reach the inevitable conclusion that there is something wrong somewhere. It may be admitted that grain can be carried by lake cheaper than by rail, but it must be admitted also that if the lake rate, which can be taken advantage of only during a few months in the year, is higher than the rail rate, which can be taken advantage of during the whole year, the railroad should be carrying that grain. If it is not, then the