

and the other untold millions that have been freely spent by the Canadian people to enlarge and deepen our waterways and make navigation possible, when the people who furnish the money have no control whatever of the navigation companies? It seems the height of absurdity, that Lambton county, which is in the centre of inland navigation, is asked to forward their freight all rail to Owen Sound, there to be placed on the Northern Navigation Company's steamers for transportation to Sault Ste. Marie. This means to us four or five days in transit, as against less than twenty-four hours, if loaded at Sarnia.

What object would there be in the Government spending thousands of dollars to open up a harbour at Leamington, if Leamington is in the same position as Lambton in connection with the same market? What advantage does Lambton derive at the present time from its geographical position in connection with its business at the head of the lakes? While rates for this have not been published as yet, it was an ordinary matter for a shipper at Montreal and Toronto to be quoted an all water rate to the head of the lakes, at the same rate as Lambton, and worse than that, was the fact that a Lambton shipper, to secure space, had to get in touch with Toronto three or four days ahead of the date of shipment, to be able to secure space at all. Often it was promised and then the shipper failed to get it.

This matter of Soo connection came up at the executive meeting of the Board of Trade and the representative of the Northern Navigation Company, who also is a member of the Council of the Board of Trade, explained the position of the company, and he most emphatically stated that as he was in charge largely of the operating department, that he was not in favour of their company accepting Soo business.

His argument was that Lambton shippers were at the present time highly favoured with regard to rates, and he considered them extremely unwise to suggest that your proposed legislation should come into effect, as he argued that the Lambton shippers would be the losers by it. This was his talk as a member of the executive.

In the same breath he demanded to know why the Government, or the people, should tell any navigation company how they should run their business.

Allow me to affirm that you have behind you, in this proposed legislation, the entire support of every fruit and vegetable shipping association of the province, and to assure you that they appreciate the good work which you are doing, which we trust you will carry forward to a completion, and that very promptly.

Last spring the Northern Navigation Company notified us of a large advance on all produce rates. After a strenuous session or two with them and a good deal of newspaper agitation we secured an adjustment, allowing them some advance on basket goods only. We pressed for lower rates on certain commodities, such as potatoes, in straight car loads, but were unable to secure any reduction.

The railroads grant what is known as a commodity rate, where shipments of certain products are heavy.

Our county is becoming fast a heavy producer of potatoes, and will need the benefit of much lower rates than are being obtained at the present time, and we cannot press you too strongly to secure for your home county these advantages.

As an illustration, we are to-day paying a water rate on potatoes, to Sault Ste. Marie, 300 miles, 15 cents per cwt., plus dockage at each end, making a total of 20 cents per cwt. Port Arthur, 600 miles, takes the same rate. Compare this with all rail rates, as furnished New Brunswick shippers.