

I would assume, Mr. Premier, that what applies to persons must necessarily apply to places, because persons are scattered all over Canada.

THE PRIME MINISTER: When did the variation take place between the rates on the prairies and those in other parts of Canada?

HON. MR. OLIVER: Perhaps Mr. McGeer will answer that.

MR. McGEER: It would be somewhere after 1886. There was a time in the beginning when the rates were slightly lower in British Columbia from the terminal points than they were from points such as Calgary. But the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was unable to produce the original tariffs; the oldest tariffs they could produce showed a substantial measure of difference in tolls.

THE PRIME MINISTER: The point that I wish to make clear in my own mind is this; If this obligation implied uniform rates throughout Canada, was the question raised that there had been a violation of that understanding when, for instance, the prairie rates were put at a higher figure than the others?

HON. MR. OLIVER: Mr. Premier, we have been fighting this for nearly twenty years, on and off.

THE PRIME MINISTER: I am not speaking now of British Columbia particularly. Take the prairie provinces; did they raise the question that there was some violation of an understanding or a principle or a pledge when a higher rate was charged on the prairies than in other parts of the country?

MR. McGEER: Well, there was no treaty; British Columbia was the only province, as Mr. Oliver has pointed out to you, that was in a position to enter into a treaty to secure railway connection. That is, we were a colony; we entered into a contract with the Dominion Government, and we made certain terms. Now, if I might be permitted to interject here -- it will save my referring to it afterwards and shorten the matter -- I would point out that if we had not entered into an agreement with the Dominion Government to secure construction of the transcontinental system which would connect the sea-board of British Columbia with the railway systems of Canada, as a colony we would have constructed railways from the sea-coast of British Columbia to the prairies and by that means we would have been able to develop a natural flow of trade from the western prairies to the sea-coast, thus adding very materially to our commerce, our industry and our general trade. As a direct result of our entering into this agreement to secure a transcontinental road, giving, as we did, enormous land grants, we have been placed in this position; by the exaction of high tariffs or tolls on the movement of the traffic from the sea-coast of British Columbia to the prairies and similarly high tolls from the prairies to the sea-coast of British Columbia, that province has been absolutely denied the right to participate in the natural flow of business offering in that western territory.

Hon.