

Railway Act

provided for under a contract. Now you can see why we support a railway costing bill.

I should like the CPR to tell parliament and the Minister of Transport how come they can collect 49 cents per hundredweight more for calcium chloride shipped to Regina, when Vancouver is 1,200 miles farther down the line. Furthermore, the railways need not go up and down all those mountains when shipping to Regina. Yet it costs 49 cents per hundredweight less to ship to Vancouver than to Regina.

Let us look at phosphates and sulphates. There is a fertilizer industry in western Canada. The rate for shipping 100,000 pound carload lots of phosphates and sulphates from Buckingham, Quebec, and Clarkson and Port Maitlan, Ontario, to Vancouver is \$2.51 per hundredweight. The rate to Regina is \$3.12, and to Saskatoon, \$3.29. What have the railways against Saskatoon? What have they against Regina?

Let us see how these agreed charges affect consumers. The rate for 80,000 pound carload lots of corn oil, corn starch, corn sugar and corn syrup from Toronto to Vancouver is \$2.20; to Regina, \$2.17, which is three cents less than the rate to Vancouver, although Regina is 1,200 miles closer to Toronto, and to Saskatoon, \$2.42. The distance from Toronto to Regina is about the same as the distance from Toronto to Saskatoon, give or take 20 or 40 miles of rail line.

Let me continue speaking about agreed charges. No wonder the people of western Canada and of the Atlantic provinces are upset after 90 years of discrimination, and betrayal of confederation by the national railroads; yet these birds opposite fight elections every time on the issue of national unity while they perpetuate discrimination in freight rates which make national unity a myth.

The agreed charge for 100,000 pound carload lots of canned foodstuffs from southern Ontario to Vancouver is \$2.57 per hundredweight; to Saskatoon it is \$2.75 per hundredweight. Madam Speaker, the Canadian National main line runs through the south side of Saskatoon, yet the rate is 18 cents per hundredweight higher to Saskatoon than it is to Vancouver. Let us look at the rate for packaged foodstuffs, including baking powder, macaroni, spaghetti, margarine, milk or cream substitutes, oils, rice, and other necessities. The rate for 80,000 pound carload lots from southern Ontario to Vancouver is \$2.43 per hundredweight; to Regina, it is \$2.71 per hundredweight, and Regina is 1,200 miles closer to southern Ontario. To Saskatoon the rate is \$2.93 per hundredweight, and Saskatoon is as far from southern Ontario as Regina is. I am enjoying this.

Mr. Murta: I'm not.

Mr. Benjamin: I hope the Minister of Transport is angry about these rates, because then we can do something about them.

● (2220)

Let us look at the open tariffs on which the minister allowed the freeze to be lifted. The minister stated this only affected 22 per cent of the railway rates. That is true.

[Mr. Benjamin.]

However, it affected more than 22 per cent of the commodities the railways haul.

I now wish to deal with the inequities in different regions of Canada. Let us look, for example, at live cattle and dressed beef. There were announcements in Alberta and Saskatchewan of cutbacks and closures of meat packing and meat processing plants. These announcements were made last year as well as from January 1 this year. There is a perfectly good reason.

If I were the owner or operator of a meat packing or processing plant in western Canada, I would close it and build a new plant in Ontario or Montreal. It was bad enough during the freight rate freeze. It cost 91 cents a hundred more to ship a whole dressed beef hanging by its hocks from Saskatoon to Montreal, Ottawa or Toronto than to ship a live cow or steer.

The minister allowed the freeze to be lifted. The railways fought the CTC order in the courts, supported by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang). With a friend like that, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) does not need any enemies.

The rate increase was allowed. Instead of the differential being 91 cents a hundred between shipping live cattle and dressed beef from Saskatoon to Montreal, on March 1 the difference will be \$1.17 per 100 pounds. I do not believe the railways can prove higher costs to ship dressed beef as compared to live cattle.

If the minister puts the requests properly and in sufficient detail, this railway costing bill will reveal that in the livestock, and meat packing and processing industry in western Canada, the railways have been robbing the people of that area.

For decades these rates have discriminated against the manufacturing industry and meat industry in western Canada without any justification other than "all that the traffic will bear". There is no significant competition. The shibboleth the Liberals and Tories abide by is competition and profitability. They got together and did us in some more.

The *Edmonton Journal* and the *Western Producer* of February 3 illustrate that it costs more to move 100 pounds of meat from Edmonton to Toronto than 100 pounds of live animal. After the 30 per cent increase, the differential will be \$1.51 per 100 pounds.

The minister has made many statements about inequities and discrimination. We all agreed with them. How can he now sit back and refuse to extend that freeze? These inequities have been compounded. Surely the minister could have said to the railways that even if the freeze only affects 22 per cent of the rates, it will remain in effect until the legislation goes through parliament and the railways' costs have been examined to see whether they are justified. If the minister had done that, he would have done a favour to the packing industry in western Canada.

Burns and Company have been forced to cut their operations in half in Prince Albert because of freight rates. They make no bones about the fact that they would rather be operating with two plants in western Canada instead of five. Why? Because of freight rates.