

in use, with a margin to allow for an increase in the weight of rolling stock; it should have engines of 700 tons weight without the tender and cars of 50 tons capacity of cargo. The road must be built with bridges capable of sustaining the weight of cars with a carrying capacity 50 per cent greater than is now required and with corresponding increase in weight of engines. And with a road of that kind, considering prospective improvements in railway material, I feel hopeful that the route will be able to compete with the water route. There has been a constant, a regular increase in the efficiency of railway transportation. We have had the introduction of the fish-plate joint, making practically a continuous rail. We have had the introduction of the steel rail in place of the iron rail. We have had the increase in the weight of the rail. We have had the increase in the firmness of the road-bed. We have had a great increase in the weight and hauling capacity of engines, and an increase in the carrying capacity of cars from 10 tons to 50 tons. Trains are run on first-class roads with a capacity of hauling 2,000 tons of cargo to the train without requiring any greater force of engineers, firemen, brakemen and other attachés of the train than were required twenty years ago for trains that carried 250 or 300 tons. And this progress and improvement still goes on; the efficiency of railways will be still further increased. And with the kind of road that I foreshadow—not the kind of roads that exist now in competition with the water transportation—it is my belief that we can compete with the water route. I know of a road with a maximum grade of 19 feet to the mile running from Buffalo to Detroit through the province of Ontario. The only limit to the size of their trains on that road is the question of their management—whether they are too unwieldy to be managed or not; they do not like a train that is over half a mile long. They can haul upon that road sixty or seventy loaded freight cars with the utmost ease. Compare that with a road on which the engine is struggling up a grade of sixty or seventy feet to the mile with twelve or fifteen cars, and you can see the difference between a first-class road and a second-class road. We want a road from Winnipeg to Quebec thoroughly first-class in its construction and equipment; a road that, in the ordinary way of business, can carry trains with 2,000 tons of freight. If we get that kind of a road, in my opinion we can transport wheat from Winnipeg to Quebec for less than 12 cents per bushel. Now, the rate to-day from Winnipeg to Port Arthur by the Canadian Pacific Railway is 7½ cents per bushel. And, at the rate I have given as a basis of transportation between Winnipeg and the lakes, the transportation on this line will be cheaper than the present transportation partly by water and partly by rail.

Mr. McCREARY. The rate from Winnipeg to Port Arthur is more than 7½ cents a bushel; it is 14 cents a hundred.

Mr. CHARLTON. They have lately reduced the rate. I was speaking with Sir Thomas Shaughnessy the other day, and he told me they had reduced the rate to 7½ cents per bushel. With the kind of road I am talking about, it is my opinion we can carry grain from Winnipeg to Quebec in competition with the partly water and the partly rail routes that pass to the south. And at this point I wish to impress upon the government the absolute necessity of securing the construction of a road of this kind. If because of difficulties of engineering, if because of enhanced cost of the road, we permit ourselves to construct a road with grades of 50 or 60 feet to the mile, we shall defeat our own purpose; we cannot do what we desire that this road should do—that is, compete with the other routes. But with a road of the kind I speak of, we can in all probability transport freight to Quebec successfully. And I say this in the face of the arguments I used on the 26th of May last, comparing water rates with the rates on the now existing roads from the west to the east.

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. gentleman's (Mr. Charlton's) argument is the exact reverse of what he said then.

Mr. CHARLTON. It will be evident that when I am dealing with new conditions, when I am dealing with a road entirely different from the class of road we have now, I am entitled to say that the results probably will be different. An argument based upon the old condition of things will not apply to the new conditions.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). What is the hon. gentleman's (Mr. Charlton's) estimate of the cost of a road of that character?

Mr. CHARLTON. I am coming to that, and—

Mr. SPROULE. I thought the hon. gentleman (Mr. Charlton) was arguing the abstract question of carriage by rail and carriage by water.

Mr. CHARLTON. It will be conducive, I think, to the object of this debate to allow me to proceed without interruption. If, when I get through, there is anything I have not touched upon, I shall be happy to deal with it. Mr. Speaker, it is evident that the government comprehends the magnitude of this issue; for it is an issue of great magnitude; we have not been confronted with so great a one since the Canadian Pacific Railway debate. The government comprehends the magnitude of this issue and has conscientiously done its best. And I may be allowed to say to my hon. friends opposite that this is a question that affects the future of this great country, with its three millions of square miles of territory, with its enormous resources and