

Mr. HENDERSON.—That statement is absolutely incorrect as far as the freights from Fort William to Montreal are concerned which are the freights that we to-day are concerned with. I have been with the company for just thirty years on the first of April this year, and I remember one year we had our whole fleet under the season's charter from Fort William to Montreal at 8 cents per bushel on grain.

Mr. NESBITT, M.P.—That was some years ago?

Mr. HENDERSON.—That was some years ago but Mr. Haslam says that freight rates have increased.

Senator WATSON.—It was eight cents last year.

Mr. HENDERSON.—I said at one period it was as high as that.

Mr. NESBITT, M.P.—We had a good deal of discussion in the House of Commons as to this increase of rates. Would it be possible for some of you people to give us a table showing the rates per bushel during the months of navigation for say ten years?

Mr. HENDERSON.—I do not think you could get that. I think perhaps an individual company might give their individual rates, but we have had no statistical bureau that would show that. I think you could get a pretty fair average for the last five years.

Mr. KING.—We have never made any effort to keep such figures.

Mr. NESBITT.—We want to get at the truth of this thing, and I would like to have the figures for ten years. I heard a man lecturing to the farmers of the east and stating that the freight rates had raised in the last ten years 100 per cent, if I am not mistaken. Now, it would be a great deal of information to us, and if you people are telling the truth there is no reason why you should not give us a table of the rates you have charged for the last ten years.

Mr. HENDERSON.—Perfectly good; and I would suggest that perhaps Mr. Payne, of the Statistical Bureau of the Department of Railways and Canals, get those figures. As far as our company is concerned I would be very glad to throw our books wide open to him and he can go back five, ten, fifteen, or thirty years if he wants to. Mr. Payne has been keeping those statistics for two years now. At present we have to send in reports to him of all our freight rates, which we are giving him frankly, and freely. If you get his report for the last year you will find that the water rates compared very favourably with the rail rates, and that the Canadian water rates through Canadian ports compare favourably with the rates to Buffalo on American boats.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (Chairman).—Then it is not true that you doubled the rates, even last year, at some seasons of the year?

Mr. HENDERSON.—I think our freight rates last year were about 20 per cent higher than they were the year previous. I think that perhaps for a couple of years they remained about steady. They were higher than they were in 1910. On the other hand our rates this year are lower than they were last year.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (Chairman).—I understood from the discussion in the House of Commons that last year your rates had increased, we will say, from 3 to 6 cents, or 3½ to 7 cents, in the season.

Mr. HENDERSON.—No, I don't think they went as low as 3 cents last year. Last year was one of our banner years—purely a question of supply and demand.

Mr. ARMSTRONG, (Chairman).—What was the highest rate charged last year?

Mr. HENDERSON.—I think the highest rate last year—I don't think they went over 8 cents a bushel on some odd cargoes. The average rate last year, I think according to Mr. Payne's statistics was about 5½ cents a bushel.

Mr. ARMSTRONG, (Chairman).—Could you tell us what the lowest rate was?

Mr. HENDERSON.—I think the lowest was about 4½ cents.