

management, further information in order to give more details.

What is the best way to improve the situation? I am ready to take, in fact I seek, advice from any or every member of this House, or whoever may be able to make any suggestion of value. Our present system of administration by a board entirely free from interference by any minister, by any department, or by the Government, is one which public opinion has demanded, and which, if we can carry it on and make the railways a success, is no doubt better for all concerned. The press and public opinion are very critical over our railway problem, and rightly so. Notwithstanding the dark side I have shown, I am still a firm believer in the ultimate success of our National Railways. But as in all other large institutions, success depends on how they are managed. This question is too big to be a political football. Might I ask the House to discuss it in its larger aspect rather than in some minor detail? Let us have instead a frank discussion of the whole railway policy.

The solution of the problem is one which will require joint action by the management and employees. Not only as employees, as operators of the road, but as citizens of Canada, their interests are identical, and I feel sure that if they, the management and employees, meet and take up the whole railway problem, they can deal with it in such a way as to preserve the good relations which have so far existed between them. Unless some action is taken, not only to reduce the annual loss occurring each year, but also to place the railways in a position to reduce the freight rates, I am satisfied the future advancement of the country will be seriously interfered with. Our railways were built to develop our natural resources, to build up our country, and to connect the East with the West in interprovincial trade. Good work has been done and it must not stop. Let me give you one or two illustrations of what high freight rates are doing. We in the province of Ontario have for many years required, in fact used, lumber and timber grown and manufactured in the province of British Columbia. To-day this trade is absolutely cut off owing to high freight rates, thus injuring British Columbia, and Ontario and our country as a whole. British Columbia requires the markets of the western provinces and even the eastern provinces for their products. It is impossible for British Columbia to

grow and ship fruit and lumber at the present high rates of freight. The Prairie Provinces must live from the products of the soil. They cannot produce wheat and other products of their farms and ship it to foreign markets if these high freight rates are to continue indefinitely, and vice versa, things that are manufactured in the East that the people of the prairie and British Columbia require, cannot be produced and shipped to the western provinces if these high rates of freight are to continue. And if we are hindered in the production and manufacture of our natural products which improve our financial condition and add to the wealth of our country, does it not mean that the development of our country will be delayed until we are in a position to produce and manufacture on a basis equal to that of other countries? Surely this is a fair statement of the situation.

I must now conclude, but cannot do so without repeating my own honest opinion that our railways are a great asset for the future of Canada. If well and properly managed, and the press and public will only boost and not knock, it will be possible in a few years to show to the world just what a magnificent country we have in Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with the permission of the House I would like to place on Hansard certain statistical and detailed information concerning last year's operations which has been supplied me by the management and which will be found of great value by hon. members.

These statements include comparative summaries of operating results and traffic statistics; a statement with regard to betterments and new construction during 1920, a comparative statement of equipment and some useful detailed information as to increased costs of rolling stock, material and supplies.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House, is of course, aware that only under exceptional circumstances are documents permitted to be inserted in Hansard when they have not been read. But, as the documents in question are of undoubted importance, I should like to know the pleasure of the House, whether it gives unanimous consent to their being incorporated in Hansard unread.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Carried.

(The documents referred to are as follows):