

**FREIGHT RATES' COMMISSION.**

**Evidence of the Winnipeg Board of Trade.**

Mr. Jas. H. Ashdown presented the case of the Winnipeg board of trade before the freight rates commission at the recent meeting of the commission in Winnipeg. Being sworn Mr. Ashdown said that he was chairman of the committee of the board of trade on freight rates, and that he was authorized and instructed by the board to appear and give evidence before the commission. Mr. Ashdown went on to say that from early times the vicinity of the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers was recognized as a distributing centre for goods for the entire country between here and the Rocky Mountains on the west and the boundary to the south. It was natural therefore that its interests as a distributing centre had been enlarged and it has continued to hold its position in that respect throughout and we have had the statement of Canadian Pacific Railway officials that 90 per cent of the merchandise coming into the country is distributed from this point. It was natural with these great interests that a board of trade should be formed, and the board early took a strong interest in the question of freight rates. In July, 1882, the board memorialized the government on the subject, in view of the opening of the Canadian Pacific railway, claiming that at that time the rates were exorbitant. They also about the same time obtained from Mr. Van Horne a statement of what the policy of the railway would be, namely, to "carry fuel at cost," because he said the settlers on those great plains would require it; to "carry settlers' building material at abate cost," and, "to carry out the settlers' grain at a mere shade over cost," adding, "and then, gentlemen, you may expect to pay a fair figure on your merchandise." The board was satisfied with this policy, and had it been carried out, they believe the result would have been extremely beneficial, both to the company and the country, but this policy has not been carried out. The question of outgoing produce having been taken up by other bodies, the board of trade did not intend to deal with it at length, but would confine themselves to merchandise coming into this country, first calling attention to rates which have been in force in the past. The rates on the line from the boundary to Winnipeg on general merchandise per 100 lbs. which was the first line opened for traffic into Manitoba.

	Class			
	1st.	2nd.	3rd.	4th.
In 1881.....	25	21	18	13
Raised in March 1883.	43	36	29	22
At present they stand	44	37	30	24

Or an advance of 80 per cent on those first established in 1881.

Rates from Port Arthur, St. Paul, Duluth and Minneapolis to Winnipeg, per 100 lbs., in car lots. Always considered common points.

	Class				
	1st.	2nd.	3rd.	4th.	5th.
October 1883. . . . .	\$1 35	\$1 13	.91	.70	—
May, 1885.....	1 07	.85	.69	.52	.47
September, 1885.	1 33	1 12	.90	.69	.63
September 1888.	1 16	.98	.89	.66	.57
May 1890.....	.92	.79	.65	.56	.47

The rates in force in 1891 still prevail and while the settlement of the country has increased and the traffic is vastly greater, the rates since 1885 have been reduced on the first three classes only, while they have been increased in the fourth and remain the same in the fifth class.

Lake and rail rates—Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton to Winnipeg:

	1	2	3	4	5
June, 1881. . . . .	50	40	.90	.74	.70

raised soon after, and again in 1887, and to-day they stand at

1	2	3	4	5
\$1.44	\$1.24	\$1.04	.88	.73

showing considerable advance on every class but the first-class on rates established ten years ago.

All-rail rates via Chicago & Rock Island road were in 1881:

1	2	3	4	5	10
\$1.77	\$1.42	\$1.06	.83	.78	.58

while at the same time all-rail via C. P. R. were:

1	2	3	4	5	6
\$1.92	\$1.57	\$1.26	.95	.85	.62

They have fluctuated somewhat since, but now they stand: C.P.R. present rate:

1	2	3	4	5	10
\$2.00	\$1.77	\$1.40	\$1.08	.89	.67

Thus showing an advance over rates that were in force on the Chicago & Rock Island route prior to the establishment of the C.P.R. of 92, 85, 81, 24 and 10 on the first five classes respectively, and on the rates first established by the C. P. R. of 17, 20, 14, 13 and 8 respectively, or a very material increase in each case over 1884. During 1891 to 1893 the 5th class rate was lowered by outside boats, going down as low as 62c but was always raised when competition ceased. The rates from the boundary to Winnipeg have been increased since the Canadian Pacific Railway took over the road. The rates from Port Arthur have been reduced but little since 1885. The rates from Montreal and eastern points lake and rail, have been increased, and all rail rates from these points have been very materially increased.

Mr. Ashdown then took up rates on the western division of the C.P.R., comparing them with rates in Minnesota and Dakota, showing how we are overcharged even in comparison with them, though the people there declare their rates to be unjust, and are asking the government to interfere. Tables were submitted showing rates compared, which indicated an increase of 17 per cent. in the Canadian tariff, on distances varying from 50 to 600 miles, as compared with Dakota, and 35 per cent. greater than is charged in Minnesota. The greatest difference is on the long hauls. In comparison with Minnesota points, ranging from 28 miles up to 110 miles, we pay, an advance of 30 per cent.; on 14 Minnesota points up to a distance of 210 miles the average charge here is 30 per cent. greater. Taking 8 Eastern Canada points, ranging from 21 miles up to 100 we pay an advance of 49 per cent. On 7 points between 100 and 210 miles, we pay an advance of 55 per cent. On 3 points between 300 and 321 miles we pay an advance of 66 per cent. on the first five classes of merchandise. In comparing Fort William to Winnipeg with Chicago to Stratford, we pay an advance of 120 per cent. on first-class, 108 per cent. on 4th class and 170 per cent. on 5th class. Comparing Fort William to Winnipeg with Chicago to St. Paul, we pay 53 per cent. advance on 1st, to 185 per cent. advance on 5th class. Goods are brought from New York to Owen Sound, a distance of 758 miles by rail, and thence 1,000 miles by water to Fort William at a total cost of 51c first-class, 44c 2nd, 35c 3rd, 25c 4th and 22c 5th class.

From Montreal, including 300 miles shorter rail haul and the same distance by water, the C.P.R. rates are 51c first class, 44c second, 38c third, 31c fourth and 25c fifth class, C.P.R. rates being higher than rates from New York though 300 miles less rail haul. While 25c is the rate on 5th class, New York to Fort William a distance of 758 miles by land and 1000 by water, the rate from Fort William to Winnipeg, for only 427 miles, is 47c. The rate from Montreal to St. Paul, via Chicago, 1283 miles, is the same as from Montreal to Fort

William 998 miles. The local rate on apples was shown to be from 90 to 155 per cent. greater here than in the east

On cordwood C.P.R. rates were stated to be 23 to 25 per cent higher than P.N.R. rates and 18 to 40 per cent advance on Grand Trunk rates, at 6 points compared.

Exhibit G, dealt with lumber rates between Eastern points, compared with rates from Rat Portage, Selkirk, Winnipeg and western points. The rates in existence from Rat Portage west showed an advance of 65 per cent, while the rates from Selkirk showed an increase of 78 per cent over Eastern Canada. The rates from Winnipeg west showed an increase of 66 per cent.

Exhibit H, showed rates on stone, sand and brick, compared with Northern Pacific rates in Dakota, being 70 per cent higher on an average of 14 points compared.

Exhibit I, dealt with live stock rates, showing local rates compared with rates in the east, averaging 53 per cent. over eastern rates. Exhibit K, submitted local rates on butter, cheese, poultry, eggs, etc. The rate on eggs from 42 to 324 miles was shown to average 82 per cent. over Eastern Canada rates. Poultry averaged 83 per cent. over eastern rates for the same distances. Butter 78 per cent. over eastern rates, Cheese 63 per cent. higher than eastern rates for distances up to 324 miles, on local car lot rates.

Exhibit L, considered local grain rates compared with local rates in Eastern Canada.

In the east.		Here.	
50 miles	6c	11c	per 100 lbs.
95 miles	9c	13c	" "
162 miles	12c	17	" "
280 miles	14c	22c	" "
392 miles	15c	25c	" "

In the matter of through grain rates, the rate from Winnipeg to Toronto was shown to be 45c, while from Chicago to Portland the rate is 27c, all rail rates. Comparing Winnipeg to Toronto as against Sarnia to Fredericton, there is a difference of 11c against us. Many similar comparisons were given showing the difference against this country in through grain rates. Similar comparisons were also given with through grain rates, lake and rail.

Comparing the lake and rail rates, Mr. Ashdown found the summer rates on wheat to have been as follows. April 7th, 1891, Minneapolis to New York 25 cents per 100 pounds; May 8th, 17 1/2 cents; June 7th, 20 cents; June 18th, 22 1/2 cents. The rates from Winnipeg to New York had been varying, the ordinary rate, he was informed, had been 31 1/2 cents. From Minneapolis to Buffalo, the summer rates via the Soo were April 7th, 20 cents; May 8th, 15 cents; June 18th, 17 1/2 cents.

On merchandise from New York to Fort William, the rates on the five classes were respectively, 51, 44, 35, 25 and 22 cents for the first five classes; from Montreal to Fort William, 51, 44, 38, 31, and 25 respectively, showing a difference in favor of New York in the three last classes of 3, 5 and 3 cents respectively; yet the rail haul from New York is 300 miles in excess of that from Montreal.

Grain is largely finding its way to the markets of the world by the way of Buffalo and New York, heavy goods will come in that way; and Montreal must cease to a great extent to be our ocean port if this discrimination continues.

With reference to persons who had been reported to have expressed themselves as satisfied with the existing charges, Mr. Ashdown said they were non-producers, to whom a little convenience in the matter of shipping was of more importance than the extra charges, or they were people who had not the opportunity of knowing what the charges were elsewhere. As to the statement that it was unfair to compare Winnipeg with a place