

# THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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## The Need for an Efficient Canadian Railway Commission.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Having given a good deal of consideration to the question of the Government of the Dominion of Canada appointing a railway and canal commission, for the purpose of regulating the carrying trade of the Dominion, I will contribute my quota to the discussion. It may be said that the Railway Committee of the Privy Council has the power, now, to regulate the business as far as preventing excessive rates from being imposed or to prevent the railways from discriminating against either localities or individuals is concerned. Clause 16, sub-section 9, of the Railway Act states that no tolls shall be levied or taken until approved by the Governor-in-Council, nor until after two weekly publications in the *Canada Gazette* of the by-law establishing such tolls, and of the order-in-council approving thereof.

Notwithstanding this clause of the Railway Act, we know that grossly extravagant rates are charged, barefaced discrimination is daily practised by our railway corporations without submitting their tariff of rates to the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, and one of the grievances which Canadians suffer under is the higher rates paid upon farm produce shipped from Canada than is charged for American produce over the same railways.

According to a circular issued by the Freight Association of the United States, and a circular issued by the Canadian Joint Freight Association, I will give a few statements of the cost of carrying goods of as near the same class as possible.

In Canada, freight is divided into ten classes, while in the United States there are only six classes of freight. The American rates quoted only apply to railways east of the Mississippi river. West of the river the classification is different. The statements are for 100 pounds for a number of miles:

Per 100 lbs.	For miles.	In the United States.	In Canada.
100	115	21 cents	38 cents
100	150	28 "	42 "
100	200	35 "	48 "
100	250	42 "	56 "

As to discriminations against different points:

Two years ago any one shipping live stock from Chicago to St. John could get a rate of 38 cents per 100 lbs., while the same rate was charged from London (in Ontario) to the same point. A farmer of my acquaintance shipped a carload of cattle from the County of Huron to North Bay, a distance of 190 miles, and paid \$190 freight. The same farmer shipped another carload from the same station in Ontario to 100 miles west of Chicago, a greater distance by about 250 miles, and paid only \$60 freight.

In shipping apples to the British market, I paid 5 cents per barrel more from Seaforth than was paid from either Wingham or Ingersoll. This amounted to \$9 per car. There are two railways at both Wingham and Ingersoll, and only one at Seaforth. I showed in the House of Commons in Canada on the 3rd of May, 1899, the following cases of discrimination by Canadian railways: From Owen Sound to Toronto, the rate on Canadian oats was 3½ cents per bushel, while the rate on American oats, including elevator and handling, was only 2½ cents, both carried over the same line of road. The grain rate from Chicago to Peterboro, by Owen Sound, is 6½ cents, while from Chatham to Peterboro the Canadian farmer must pay 9½ cents. American corn from Owen Sound to Ottawa was 6½ cents, while Canadian corn from Chatham to Ottawa was 10½ cents. At Teeswater, American corn is delivered from Owen Sound for 4½ cents per bushel, while the rate on Canadian corn from Chatham is 7½ cents. The rate on American corn from Owen Sound to Peterboro is 4½ cents per bushel—a strong contrast to the rate of 9½ cents charged between Chatham and Peterboro. These are discriminations that a railway commission could deal with.

In the fall of 1898 the railway companies enforced heavier rates upon oil coming from the United States into Canada. Here are some of the old rates as compared with some of the new ones enforced:

	Old Rate Per 100 lbs.	New Rate Per 100 lbs.
From Toronto to Brampton.....	14 cents	22½ cents
" " " Southampton.....	29 "	40½ "
" " " Port Hope.....	20 "	28½ "
" " " Orangeville.....	17 "	27½ "
" " " Peterboro.....	23 "	34 "
" " " Wiarton.....	24 "	40½ "
" " " Brockville.....	25 "	47 "

Here are increases in some instances of over 50%, and yet I will guarantee that the railway companies did not lay their increased rates before the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, as the Railway Act requires should be done.

These increases in the carrying rates on coal oil would have become general all over Canada had it not been that one or two independent railway companies would not join the combine.

Here are rates that were charged by the railways after the change took place. On coal oil, from Hamilton, in barrels less than car lots:

	On Canadian oil.	On American oil.
Hamilton to Ingersoll.....	18 cents	27 cents
" " Woodstock.....	17 "	25½ "
" " Berlin.....	18 "	27 "
" " Harrisburg.....	11 "	21 "
" " Copetown.....	9 "	19½ "
" " Dunville.....	15 "	24½ "
" " Beeton.....	20 "	28½ "
" " Cookstown.....	21 "	30 "

The Canadian oil belonged entirely to the Standard Oil Co., at whose dictation our Canadian railway companies raised the carrying rates upon oil, and the statement was made at Ottawa that the railway companies had to hand over the increased rates to the Standard Oil Co. The American oil belonged to a few independent oil companies that were sending oil from the United States to Canada.

One of my sons went to Prince Albert, N.-W. T., bought three carloads of cattle and shipped them to Montreal. He paid \$197 freight per car. While in Prince Albert he sold a carload of apples to go from Seaforth to Prince Albert, thirty miles of a shorter haul than from Prince Albert to Montreal, and yet the freight on the car of apples was \$518. I might go on and repeat a number of other instances of extravagant charge by the railways, but I will only mention a few instances as brought up at the late meeting of the Fruit Growers' Association at Brantford.

A Mr. Bunting, of St. Catharines, a fruit-grower, is reported to have said: "Speaking of express rates, these rates are altogether too high; the rate from Niagara to Montreal is 80 cents per 100 lbs. This figures out to \$160 per car. During the height of the fruit season, four or five cars is shipped by express daily from our station to Montreal. Even four cars at the rate quoted would figure up to \$640."

Mr. Alex. McNeil is reported to have said: "We are discriminated against both as fruit-growers and Canadians. As fruit-growers, the C. P. R. will bring wheat from Manitoba to the east for from \$10 to \$50 per car. The cars which bring the wheat from Manitoba east are very largely hauled back empty, but when we ask for one of those cars for the purpose of shipping our grapes to the prairies, we are told that the charge per car is nearly \$100. The grapes are really easier handled than the wheat; they are loaded and unloaded more quickly than the grain: their carriage does not invite so much risk as is involved in the case of wheat, and still we are charged double the price for the grape car that is paid for the wheat car."

"I live, as you know, close to the City of Detroit. I can put grapes on board a car at Detroit and ship them to Chicago, a distance of 175 miles, for 19 cents per cwt., but if I put them on board at Windsor and ship to London, Ontario, a distance of about 100 miles, the rate is 32 cents per cwt."

Mr. A. Boulton, the big Prince Edward County fruit packer, is reported to have said: "If you drop freight off at Halifax it will cost you 4 cents more per cwt. than it would cost had you sent it on to Liverpool." Just here it is reported that Hudson Usher a short time ago said: "It cost more to ship a barrel of cement from Queenston to Winnipeg than from Liverpool to Winnipeg." In a newspaper of Dec. 26th last, it is reported that the G. T. R. is actually charging less for hauling grain and flour from Chicago to Portland than from Ontario points.

As to the carrying rates charged in the United States, I am fully convinced that they are lower than in Canada, and that it is in a great measure owing to the influence of railway commissions. Mr. Sifton, in a speech a little over a year ago, is reported to have said that it cost the farmers of Canada at least ten per cent. more than it cost the farmers of the United States to get their produce to the seaboard.

The following is taken from a pamphlet on changes on rates charged by railroads in the United States:

In 1871 the rate per ton per mile in cents was 1.884 cts.

In 1878 the rate per ton per mile in cents was 1.296 cts.

In 1885 it was 1.011 cts.; in 1890, 0.941 cts.; in 1897 it was 0.806 cts.

A reduction in 26 years of 57% on the freight rates in the United States.

On the Michigan Central the rates charged per ton per mile in 1874 was 1.728 cts.; in 1897 it was reduced to 0.615 cts., a reduction of 66% in 23 years.

Cattle rates from Chicago to New York in 1883 were .40 cts. per 100 lbs.; cattle rates from Chicago to New York in 1897 were .28 cts. per 100 lbs., a reduction of 30% in 14 years.

The following is taken from a pamphlet termed "Railway Nationalization," giving the average receipts per ton per mile from 1882 to 1896. I will give three periods: The average freight rates per ton per mile charged in the United States in cents and fractions of cents in 1882 was 1.24 cts.; in 1889 it was 0.97 cts.; in 1896 it was 0.80 cts. This shows a reduction of 34% in 14 years.

The above quotations show that great reductions have taken place in American railway freight rates, whereas, comparatively, there has been almost no reduction in Canadian freight rates, with the exception obtained from the C. P. R. by the Dominion Government through the arrangement made for the building of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway.

As to the benefit of railway commissions in the United States (the Illinois Railway Commission), Frederick Clark says: In 1880 there were 47 formal complaints, 25 for extortion, 13 for unjust discrimination, 6 for both, and 3 for other reasons. All these were settled by the commissioners. When the railways were decided against, they promptly responded to the decision of the commission. Such was the effect of the decision of the United States Supreme Court, which, this same year, affirmed the right of the Legislature of a State to regulate rates of freight and fare by means of its commission. In 1884 the number of cases was reduced to three for unjust discrimination. In 1895 there was no record of any complaint. The bulk of the traffic was interstate, and the question was raised, "Had a State the right to regulate traffic in the absence of federal legislation?" and the Federal Court decided that the State had not the right to regulate interstate traffic in the absence of Federal legislation.

The question was then asked, "What were the results?" Answer—It has been largely instrumental in reducing railway rates throughout the State. The railways were even benefited, as they gained in revenue from anti-discriminating clauses more than they lost from the prohibition of the greater charges in the shorter hauls.

Then it became necessary for Congress to appoint an Interstate Commission, and as there were over 30 States that had appointed commissions, a difficulty arose with the Interstate Commission in legislating not to interfere with the legislation in any of the States. If the Federal Government of the United States had full control of all the railways, as the Dominion Government in Canada has, there would not have been the same trouble in getting satisfactory results, as proven by the reports of the Illinois State Commission.

It has been said that the Railway Commission in Britain has not given satisfaction, and that the people of Britain are disappointed. The first bill appointing a railway commission in England was passed in 1873, and did not prove very satisfactory. The law of 1873 was amended by a bill passed in 1888; and again by another bill in 1894. In 1896 what is called the "Light Railway Act" was passed. I will give two or three cases settled:

A railway corporation charged a manufacturing firm (which had a siding) 13d. for every ton of freight shunted. They considered the charge exorbitant and applied to the railway commission, who reduced the charge from 13d. to 9d. per ton. This is a sample of the action of the commission.

In 1898, out of 103 cases taken before the commission, 23 were settled without being tried, and in 1899, out of 114 cases, 11 were settled without being tried.

In England it has been found that the checking and control of railway building is more effective than volumes of law regulations. No railway in