

ada. Then, I think, he was on good solid ground. It was most ungrateful, after all the Conservative party had done for those interests, when they thought there was going to be a change of Government, to desert and leave the Government in the hole. It just proves the old adage that gratitude is a lively sense of favours to come, with no consideration of favours in the past.

Another suggestion I would like to make is that when the Government bring in a re-distribution Bill, and particularly when they amend the Election Act, as I suppose they will, provision should be made for proportional representation. If not over the whole of the Dominion, it might be applied at first to the cities and other densely populated parts of the country. My own impression is that it could be applied to the whole country with great advantage. Then there would no longer be such a condition as whole provinces voting solidly for one party. There is not a province in this country that would have been represented wholly by one side if we had had proportional representation in the last election. Quebec would have elected a considerable number of representatives to support this side of the House; so would the Maritime Provinces; so would the West, and it would be an advantage all round to have the people represented in Parliament according to the views and sentiments held throughout the country.

The next matter I wish to discuss for a short time is the railway question with the question of freight rates. In my opinion, honourable gentlemen, the question of railways and freight rates is the predominant problem in Canada to-day. As affecting the farmers particularly, it is of much greater importance at the present time than the tariff. It cannot help but be, and I desire to say right here that the present rates are simply paralyzing the trade of the country. I am not complaining of the rates having been raised during the war. I think it was all right for the Government to raise those rates. It was all right to set aside the Crowsnest agreement and give the Railway Board permission to increase the rates on that road irrespective of the agreement that had been made. But now conditions have changed, and if these rates are kept up you are going to have stagnation. I notice by the Speech from the Throne that the Government expect that there will be better times in the very near future. I want to say, honourable gentlemen, that there can be no better times until

the question of freight rates is settled. How are we going to settle it?

One man will tell you that if you reduce the freight rates you are going simply to put the railways out of business; that with the present condition of labour you cannot reduce the freight rates. My answer to that is this: Reduce the freight rates first, then tackle the labour question. If you have the freight rates reduced, the railroads will be able to reduce the wages. Unreasonable wages are being paid on the railways. It is not so much the rate of pay per day; it is the rate of pay for the amount of work that is done. I do not blame the Government for increasing the wages when they did. When the McAdoo award came out we were engaged in the war, and if they had not agreed to those rates there would have been a general tie-up of the railroads all over Canada. We could not afford to have that during the war. The McAdoo award was not so very bad itself, but where some people got in their work was in this, that in addition to the McAdoo award there was inserted a little clause saying, "and all amendments thereto." After that award there were seventeen amendments to it, with the result that the railroad men could do practically what they liked. We travel on fast trains. But take the freight traffic of the country. A crew starts out from a divisional point. At the present time they are getting high wages. The run is one hundred miles for a day's pay. They have eight hours in which to do it. There are a hundred different ways for that railroad crew, if they wish, to delay and get in three or four hours late. That means that for the last three or four hours they can draw as much wages as they did for the first eight, either by receiving pay and a half or by increased mileage. I have had instances brought to my attention, honourable gentlemen. In one instance, I remember, a man who was working on a snow-plough got his boy also appointed on the plough. They start from a division and their pay counts until they get to the next division. They may be three days getting to the next division. And what are the wages? For the first eight hours they are paid their ordinary regular wages, and after that they get pay and a half, day and night, Saturday and Sunday, working, sleeping, or eating. They get pay and a half for twenty-four hours a day. This particular man that I am mentioning and his boy were out for the month of February and drew \$800 odd.