

Senator WATSON.—But they have washouts.

Mr. RICHARDSON.—Very few. They figure those out to a decimal, but you could not figure a storm like the one on the 9th November last, which was a catastrophe. That caused the rates to go up. The boats were short. The boats buried in Lake Huron were not available for traffic.

Senator WATSON.—The rates were higher before the storm.

Mr. RICHARDSON.—I was laying for low rates and got them, and as soon as that storm came we all plunged in, and there were not enough vessels to go around. We simply grabbed for the freight.

Senator WATSON.—What was the date of that storm?

Mr. RICHARDSON.—The 9th November.

A MEMBER.—How much later than that did you ship?

Mr. RICHARDSON.—We shipped out of Fort William the 15th or 16th December a year ago, but our usual insurance expired on the 5th December, by paying extra we got extensions for five or ten days more.

Senator WATSON.—What was the rate to Montreal?

Mr. RICHARDSON.—Five and a half. It never got much over six and a half that season. There were no high rates last fall.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (Chairman).—What objection have you to filing your rate with the Railway Commission?

Mr. RICHARDSON.—It would ruin our business.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (Chairman).—In what way?

Mr. RICHARDSON.—I could not do anything. Our business has to be done promptly and everybody would cut down. You would have this thing so cut that there would be no money in it.

Mr. NESBITT, *M.P.*—Speaking from the grain dealers' standpoint you think if there were a fixed rate it would have a tendency to raise the rates?

Mr. RICHARDSON.—Yes.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (Chairman).—In what way?

Mr. RICHARDSON.—Cut out competition and you could not fix a rate for those boats.

Senator THOMPSON.—If you had a maximum rate fixed, and a flexible rate, so that you could not go below a certain rate or above a certain rate, how would it work?

Mr. RICHARDSON.—What use would it be if it were a high maximum rate? I think I am pretty liberal. I came down here a year ago last fall, and I asked the Government to allow the American tonnage to come into Fort William, because I knew what my brothers in the association did not know, that there was not enough storage in Fort William, and we would have to forego the coasting laws, and I did it. When the Government saw the situation Morine got behind me, and they released the profit they would have for the sake of the country.

Mr. KING.—The Marine Association is unalterably opposed to the holding up of the coasting laws. We suffered and took our medicine the best way we could.

Mr. RICHARDSON.—You did not fight against it?

Mr. KING.—No.

Mr. MACLEAN, *M.P.*—We have been told that notwithstanding the fact that Canada increased her expenditure every year for the improvement of her harbours, rivers and canals, the shipping men and steamboat men got the cream of all that, and the country got no benefit from it.

Mr. RICHARDSON.—But you do get the benefit.

Mr. MACLEAN, *M.P.*—The rates apparently increase.