

*Railway Act*

Vancouver, which is a twenty-eight mile strip. I thought that was hardly fair, and I do not see why we cannot expand the western area or, in other words, bring it in farther from our coast. If possible I would like to see it include the area in which the fruit industry of British Columbia is located. We have not an extensive agricultural industry in that province, but we have a very specialized one. The most important feature, and the most important product of our agriculture there, is the very magnificent grade of fruit produced by the fruit-growing industry of British Columbia, a product which finds a market in all the provinces of Canada. It is more of a tribute to our fruit than to the Canadian freight rate structure that last year several cars were shipped to Newfoundland at freight rates of \$1,700 to \$1,800 per car. We will go into that point as we proceed with the discussion.

I noticed in the Vancouver paper that the hon. member for Kootenay East and I had joined with the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra in a battle in committee, and that we had lost. The hon. member for Kootenay East and myself will have to be more careful of our allies in the future. I am going to say this, that I do join with him in my concern with respect to the transcontinental competitive rates. That is a matter in connection with which there is considerable history in our province. It did not start with the building of the Panama canal. As a matter of fact those transcontinental competitive water-compelled rates were in effect long before the Panama canal was thought of. And as a matter of fact there was movement by way of the Horn which really had an effect upon the very earliest freight rates established continent-wide. That competitive position, so far as transcontinental rates are concerned, is very important to us. It is a very low rate on many commodities, but it is a rate upon which provision is made for shipment to the intermediate territory in Canada.

In order to relieve the disabilities that have come upon the prairie provinces in the matter of freight rates, this bill establishes the provision that upon shipments from either the eastern or western territory into the intermediate territory, the rate to no point shall be greater than one and one-third times the transcontinental rate. That is a matter of very great concern to the central provinces and will bring them a tremendous measure of relief, for which I think the people in all other parts of Canada will be very happy indeed. But I do point this out, that to bring

them that relief it simply has to operate and it can only operate on the basis of the maintenance of our transcontinental rates.

I wish to thank the committee for giving me so much time to discuss the matter at this stage. I enjoyed working on the committee. It is an engrossing subject, which one would have to study many years before he could say that he had any considerable knowledge with respect to it. It is a dynamic problem, and we are dealing with it in a dynamic country. The greatest mistake we could possibly make at this time would be to think that by writing a bill like this we are going to solve the disputes in respect of freight rates for all time. I think we should disabuse our minds of that right now, because we will find that within four or five years this country will be faced with a brand new set of conditions which will make many of the present conditions connected with freight rates entirely outmoded. We can expect that.

One of those factors, I will say, is going to be the industrialization of the west, something that is on our doorstep right now. It is affecting Alberta and British Columbia today, and there is no doubt that this industrialization will move into Saskatchewan, too. Much of that movement will be west-bound, toward the water.

**Mr. Fraser:** Not while they have a C.C.F. government there.

**Mr. Coldwell:** That is a silly remark.

**Mr. Fraser:** No, it is not.

**Mr. Sinnott:** Let them fight it out.

**Mr. Laing:** I believe we will have that industrialization, and I trust the people of Canada, when they have profitable industrialization, will also have a government of their choice. I think they will probably have the right government, when they have that industrialization.

We must keep the thought clearly in our minds that we are going to continue to make changes as we go along. There is one further point concerning which I disagree with the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra and his followers. I refer to the provision discussed this afternoon, to increase the salaries of the commissioners. I thought the hon. member and his followers took a very backward stand. What are the salaries of the high officers of the two railways today? I take it they are probably two or three times the amount the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra would want to pay these commissioners, who are charged with the responsibility of administering the conditions under