

Last year when a similar bill was before the house the Minister of Railways stated that the railways in the United States charged more for taking grain to the Pacific coast than did the railways in Canada. I should like to point out to the minister that the railways in the United States have and use only one classification for grain while the Canadian railways use two from the prairies to Vancouver and charge double for grain for domestic use. This is an injustice which should be righted. The minister should remember also that the railways in the states take the products of the farmer east to New York or other points at a cheaper rate than do the railways in Canada. I could mention many instances, but I shall refer to only one, the shipment of eggs. The rate on eggs from Vancouver to Montreal is \$2.50 per hundred pounds while the rate from Seattle to New York, a longer distance, is \$2.25. The farmer in the state of Washington has a further advantage over the poultryman in British Columbia.

I expect that the minister will oppose this bill upon the ground that the railways are in such a deplorable condition and that we should be satisfied to get any reduction. I have one or two questions I should like the minister to answer when he does speak. The first is: Are we in British Columbia entitled to the same treatment in freight rates mile for mile, provided the grades are similar, as is given to the rest of Canada? That question I also put to the house. If the minister thinks we are not entitled to the same treatment, he can give me his reasons. There is one undisputed fact which has been reiterated time and again in this house; I do not like to take up the time of the house in repeating it but, like some sermons, it has to be repeated again and again before it will permeate the brains of many hon. members. That is, that the grade from Alberta over the Canadian National railways is undisputedly the easiest and the finest in the whole of Canada. Many people believe, because there is a mountain to be traversed, the grade from Vancouver to Edmonton is very steep. It is not; it is the lowest grade in the whole dominion, and by the way, it cost less to build than did many sections in both the prairies and eastern Canada. Let me ask the minister again: Are we not entitled, mile for mile and grades considered, to the same or as good treatment as that received by the rest of Canada? I maintain that we are and I leave that to the minister to answer.

The grade to Vancouver, as I have pointed out, is one of the best and easiest in Canada.

In 1925 or 1926 the Board of Railway Commissioners rendered a decision saying that Vancouver should have for export the same rate as the Crowsnest pass rate. Strange to say, that has not been carried out, because the rate from Calgary or Edmonton is twenty cents per 100 pounds for a computed distance of 642 miles. That is the distance that is computed, because from Calgary to Vancouver it is 642 miles and from Edmonton a greater distance. From Edmonton or Calgary going east, the distance is far greater, being over 1,200 miles and the rate is only some twenty-six cents. Thus the distance to Fort William is almost double that to Vancouver, but the cost is not double; it is only one-third more. Under such circumstances can we be blamed for being dissatisfied with getting only ten cents off the domestic rate, and that for feed wheat only, and which is still eleven cents higher than the export, the export rate, I might point out, being three or four cents higher than that on grain products going to eastern points? While naturally we are pleased with a reduction, we do not consider it sufficient.

There is another point I would draw to the attention of the minister, and perhaps he will also answer it. Last year more grain for export was shipped through Vancouver than through practically all the other Canadian ports. The quantity shipped through Vancouver for export was over 104,000,000 bushels, and I would ask the minister: Did the railways haul that at a loss? If they did, what about the grain going east? If they hauled 104,000,000 bushels going west at a loss, what must the loss have been when they were hauling grain east, because in some parts of Canada they are hauling grain twice the distance for a lower rate? I have under my hand some figures regarding haulage that were given to the house the other day. From Georgian bay ports to Halifax, a distance of 1,208 miles, the rate was only fifteen cents, whereas from Calgary to Vancouver, a distance of 642 miles, the rate is twenty cents. There is no comparison at all.

To go back however, if that quantity of 104,000,000 bushels going west was hauled at a loss, what must the loss be in hauling grain east? I doubt very much however whether that grain is hauled at a loss. But even if it were, are the people of British Columbia to be penalized to help make up any losses that may arise in that or any other way? I say that they should not be penalized. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, that grain was not hauled to Vancouver at a loss, and before any hon. member undertakes to say