

they will not be used, and those ports will suffer as a consequence. I realize that the operation of this road through American territory must of necessity draw trade away from the ports of the Maritime provinces, and we shall find our products and our ocean traffic going through foreign country channels by the operation of this road, according to the statement of my hon. friend.

That is the stand I took upon that occasion in regard to taking over the Grand Trunk. If the Grand Trunk had not been taken over, this question of the port through which the export freight of the West would go would not have been raised; but to-day it is a serious question for the people of the Maritime provinces and for the ports of St. John and Halifax, on which a large amount of money has been expended for development. The freight going over the Canadian National railways to the port of St. John to-day is practically nil. I hope that before very long this matter can be taken up and remedied. My hon. friend says that we must get clear of this outlet to Portland. Well, we have the road and it must be operated, but I have hope and very great confidence that after this matter has been given some study some reasonable arrangement can be made whereby a portion of the export freight from the western prairies will be brought down to maritime province ports. We had the very great pleasure a few weeks ago of having a number of the Progressive members, whom I see before me now, visit the Maritime provinces. They spent some time at Halifax and St. John looking over these ports, and I am sure they realize the splendid facilities we have there for the shipment of grain. Now, a question has arisen between the people of the Maritime provinces and the Board of Management of the Canadian National Railway system. Some people in the Maritime provinces say, and they think they are right, that the Canadian National Railways have a right to route grain just as they like. On the other hand, the argument is made that it is the right entirely of the shipper to say how his grain shall be routed, whether it is for export or for some local destination. But we shall never get anywhere by sitting down and grouching about this thing, that and the other.

The thing for the people of the Maritime provinces, for whom I have every sympathy and consideration, to do to-day, is to look into this question from a business standpoint. I think it would be wise on their part to choose a business committee who would do for the Maritime provinces what the Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade of Port-

land, Maine, did for that city last year. I have every confidence that if such a committee were appointed and went to the West and explained the situation of the Maritime provinces to the people there, that a thorough understanding could be reached of the problems confronting both East and West, and the difficulties under which the respective communities labour. By a full understanding of the situation on the part of each, a solution of the existing difficulties could be worked out which would be beneficial to both the East and the West, and to the country as a whole. To represent Sir Henry Thornton as absolutely unsympathetic to the Maritime provinces is unjust; I have not found him to be so, and I hope it is not the case. I cannot for one moment believe that a man of his great reputation and experience would consider operating the National Railway system in any other manner than in the best interests of the country as a whole. For many years certain railways that compose that system were a burden to the people; but judging from the financial results of the last year or two there is reason to hope that that era will soon be over, and that in the near future the greatest benefit to the Dominion will flow from the operations of the National Railway system. The railway question is a big question and considerable time might be occupied in discussing it.

I have already talked too long or I would deal to some extent with the question of freight rates which has aroused considerable attention in the public mind. It costs considerable money to operate the National Railway system of Canada. It is a magnificent system, and ultimately may prove to be a big asset to the country, but it is costing the taxpayers of Canada a great deal of money. We would all like to see a lowering of the freight rates. It is sometimes argued that if the rates are lowered the volume of traffic would be larger and the receipts would be considerably augmented. That is a question that remains to be settled but I can say from my own experience that the people from any section of Canada will be courteously and fairly treated in any representations they may make to Sir Henry Thornton, and their views will receive the most businesslike consideration. Any suggestions I make in this matter are not advanced in any spirit of criticism: I simply desire to say that if the people of any section of the Dominion have grievances, either real or fancied, it is their duty to place those grievances before the board of management and to endeavour to have their difficulties adjusted.