

uents, and he voted to sacrifice the potato growers of his own constituency in order to help out the, no doubt unfortunate, grain growers who were, in the higher circles, pocketing the spoils in the way of overages, shortages and these other things.

Mr. EVANS: Does the hon. member infer that the West is getting a service for which it does not pay?

Mr. BAXTER: I am not inferring anything of the kind, and I am not even going to discuss that point elaborately. What I want to get at is, that if the West wants, as the West has said it wants, all sorts of commodities to come in free of customs duties, and if it wants all commodities hauled as cheaply as can be on the railways, then, if there is an agricultural industry down in New Brunswick that is vital to us, we do not want to have our rates raised above the cost of haulage in order to make these other things possible for the West or the East, the North or the South.

Now at the time this parliamentary bargain was made last year the railways had already lowered their freight charges, taking about three million dollars off the general cost of railway haulage of grain; another fourteen million dollars was taken off by the retention of the Crowsnest pass agreement; making about seventeen million dollars of a reduction on one commodity alone, and paying no regard whatever to any other class of freight.

Mr. FORKE: There was more money made by the railways out of that one commodity than out of any other class of freight they carried.

Mr. BAXTER: Perhaps a greater quantity of that commodity was handled than of any other freight. Perhaps my hon. friend will also recollect the suggestion that of this seventeen million dollars saved to the grain growers by the action of this parliament, a very considerable portion was taken by the lake transportation companies.

Some hon. MEMBERS: All of it.

Mr. BAXTER: Was it? Then perhaps my hon. friends to my left will contrast the action of the autocratic government of my right hon. friend here (Mr. Meighen), as it has been termed, when its leader took the bit between his teeth and suspended the navigation laws in order to afford relief to the West, with the want of action on the part of a government so friendly to them, but which refrained from granting my hon. friends similar relief. I am not fighting my hon. friends to my left and I am not working with them, I am simply putting forward the case of the

potato growers of New Brunswick, and I am going to ask my hon. friends to my left to examine their consciences and say if the New Brunswick potato growers have received a fair, square deal.

In the parliamentary agreement of last year potatoes were not mentioned. Now, can you tell me anything that distinguishes the man who grows grain from the man who grows potatoes? Is there any reason why a burden should be even partially lifted from the one and yet allowed to remain upon the other? I know my hon. friends will not say there is any reason. Well, then, what happened? The government's action paralyzed the Board of Railway Commissioners, and the potato growers of New Brunswick could not seek relief in that quarter. Railway rates were so much reduced that the railway companies, which have to pay their bills like every other company, had to get money from some source and the only source of course, of their revenue is the passengers and freight they handle. Therefore the Railway Commission could afford no relief by lowering the freight rates on potatoes or lumber, except upon one commodity only coming under the classification of building materials, namely, bricks, and in this instance the reduction was very small.

Now then, the action of the government, in combination with my hon. friends to my

left, shut out the potato growers of 5 p.m. New Brunswick from any redress at the hands of the Railway Commission, a tribunal whose purpose is to see that there is no unjust discrimination in railway rates. That is the tribunal to which we go for justice in transportation matters. The Railway Commission said: We cannot give you any relief by reducing the freight rates on potatoes or other commodities without reducing the revenues of the railways to such a point that they will not be able to meet their operating expenses, and such an unsound financial position would only bring ruin upon the railways of Canada a little sooner. Remember, the government interfered with the Railway Commissioners, otherwise they would have taken up the case of the potato grower, of the lumberman, and of the shipper of all other classes of freight. No one class would have got all they wanted, but the most expert railway brains in the country would have been put to work upon the freight rates problem, and we would have got the best attempt possible to do equal justice to all classes of freight shippers—a far better attempt than can ever be made by any government or any parliamentary committee, no matter how able it may be.