

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** You are putting bad ideas into our heads.

**Hon. Mr. Brunt:** That was bad legislation then; it is good now.

**Hon. Mr. Aseltine:** But after many conferences back and forth the bill was allowed to pass, with this proviso, that it was to remain in force for only three years. As soon as the bill was passed, up went the rates. The Regina rate went up to 25 cents per 100 pounds, and in 1920 it went up to 32.5 cents. On January 1, 1921, the rate went down to 31 cents, and on December 1 of that year, to 29 cents. At the end of the three-year period it went back to 20 cents.

Between 1922 and 1925 there was a lot of confusion. Neither the farmers nor the railways knew where they stood, and no one could tell what was going to happen to these rates. However, in 1925 the Government brought in a bill which released the railway with respect to the reduced rates on west-bound traffic but provided for the continuance of the Crowsnest rates on shipments of grain, flour and grain products in perpetuity. In 1927, by order of the Railway Board, the Crowsnest rates were extended westward to Pacific ports and to Churchill, and these rates have remained in force ever since.

Honourable senators, the action of the Senate in 1919 saved the people of the Prairie provinces many millions of dollars. I have heard estimates of the amount saved, some high and some low, but I know that with a big crop and the rates remaining as they were in 1897 many millions of dollars have as a result gone into the pockets of the farmers of the Prairie provinces every year and assisted the grain growers of those provinces in marketing their grain and flour in the markets of the world, without which assistance they would have been unable to compete for that business, which in some years has amounted to \$1 billion.

**Hon. Mr. Isnor:** Thank you; that is the figure I wanted.

**Hon. Mr. Aseltine:** The Crowsnest Pass rates are therefore statutory, and it has been held that they cannot be changed by the Transport Board, but only by act of Parliament.

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** Would the honourable senator tell me this: While the rates have remained at the figure of 20 cents, or whatever it is, for all these years since 1897, has the value of the money in which they have been paid remained constant?

**Hon. Mr. Aseltine:** Well, you would not expect me to answer that question, would you? As I said, these Crowsnest Pass rates are therefore statutory, and it has been held

that they cannot be changed except by act of Parliament. In 1951 the Government set up a Royal Commission on Transportation, known as the Turgeon Commission, which fully investigated these rates and dealt with all the arguments by the railway companies for their repeal, and by the farmers and provinces, and others for their continuance. In its report of February 1951, at page 249, the commission gave the following decision:

The conclusion which commends itself to the commission is that the time has not come for Parliament to divest itself of the immediate control of these rates which it assumed in 1897. Such a time may come later with the evolution of the country's economic position, but it seems certain that it has not yet come in this case. On the contrary it would be against the national interest at this moment, in view of the uncertainties which exist in world affairs, and consequently in world market prospects, to subject this great export industry to the disturbance which the abandonment of statutory protection would undoubtedly cause. This abandonment would mean that Parliament no longer looks upon western Canada's production of grain for export as an industry requiring special consideration in the national interest. There is no doubt that the effect of such a measure at this time would be particularly unfortunate.

Honourable senators, I would like to say that the retention of the Crowsnest Pass rates is, in my opinion, to the lasting credit of the Senate of Canada. As I have said, they are most vital to the economy of the Prairie provinces, enabling them to compete with other nations which are closer to the sea in respect to grain, flour and grain products; and I understand that the grain growers of western Canada were greatly relieved when the Prime Minister made a statement not long ago in the other place that there is no intention of doing away with these Crowsnest Pass rates.

I have nearly finished. We are going to have a heavy program of legislation; at least, that is my opinion after reading the Speech from the Throne carefully several times, and I am going to make an effort to have as much legislation as possible introduced in the Senate.

**Hon. Mr. Brunt:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Aseltine:** I have already introduced two bills, and there is another one that I hope will be ready for introduction tomorrow or the next day.

Honourable senators will gather from my remarks that I am not the least bit down-hearted. I look forward to the future with the greatest confidence. Let us hope that peace and good will will continue to prevail throughout the world.

**Hon. Mr. Isnor:** Honourable senators, I wonder if the Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Aseltine), after having painted such a bright picture of Saskatchewan,