

however, that it was his intention to send some to St. John as soon as possible but that perhaps the Grand Trunk had been taking grain. On inquiry it turned out that the Grand Trunk had been taking grain from Montreal to Portland. Now, if that is to continue, and grain is to go through American routes, then I say to my hon. friend the Minister of Customs, that the people of St. John might as well have no harbour at all. It is not only money for their harbour that the people there require; they need trade as well, and as we know, only about 24 per cent of the grain trade last year moved through Canadian ports.

Mr. McMASTER: The Minister of Railways is shaking his head; you had better prove your statement.

Mr. TURGEON: He knows I am correct. Only 24 per cent during the past six months has gone through Canadian ports; the rest has gone through American ports.

Hon. Mr. REID: The very opposite is the case; the figures should be reversed.

Mr. TURGEON: I have not under my hand at this moment the figures to establish my statement, but it is well known that from twenty-four to thirty per cent of the grain trade of the West has gone to Canadian ports, and of that thirty per cent at least eighty-five or ninety per cent is controlled by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, leaving very little available for the Canadian National Railway. It is in the hope that provision may be made for the future that I am now impressing upon the committee and the Minister of Railways the existing conditions in this country. As I say we have lost the export trade and we have lost the imports which the control of that trade would have meant for the West. The Transcontinental and Grand Trunk Pacific was especially designed to haul heavier trains than the other railways could haul—they are railways designed to carry as much as 10,000 bushels of grain in less time at a lower rate than other railways could do. Special transportation facilities are required for the carriage of wheat owing to the small profit which the farmer is necessarily bound to get; with such a long haul, and that factor in the future is bound to be of much greater importance than it has been in the past. It is quite true that owing to the war the grain products of the West for a few years commanded a high price; but when things return to normal state

the farmers of the West will inevitably suffer unless we can cheapen the cost of transportation for them, and the heavy cost of carrying the wheat will swallow up, or greatly reduce, the small margin of profit likely to come to them. If the situation is not seriously considered and a remedy provided the farmers of the West are bound to encounter hardships in the future, and it would be indeed an evil day if our western wheat should ever come to lose its commanding place in the markets of the world. The price of wheat is fixed in Liverpool and the cost of the long rail haul in Canada should be reduced in every way possible. The profits or losses incurred by our western farmers depend to a great extent upon whether the cost of transportation has been brought down to the lowest possible point. In the case of a train load of silk, intended for the large centres of the East, which our railroads carry from the Pacific and which is perhaps worth millions of dollars, an enhanced freight rate may not be a very serious thing; but the addition of a cent or two to the cost of carrying wheat, and other farm products, may mean all the difference between profit and loss.

In the matter of ocean insurance the improvements in the St. Lawrence have made that route absolutely safe and today there is no greater danger of accident on the St. Lawrence than there is on the ocean itself. That is as regards summer navigation. If we take winter navigation the ports of St. John and of Halifax also provide safe routes, and there is no reason why a higher rate of insurance should be charged on vessels sailing from these ports than in the case of ships sailing from Boston or Portland. Our summer and winter ports are therefore in a good position to handle the export trade coming from the West, and excessive ocean insurance rates should not be demanded.

The National Transcontinental railway was built with the idea not only of carrying eastward and westward bound freights, but of providing a fast passenger and mail service. We have lost this trade also. It has gone mostly to the United States ports; the balance has been captured by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. On the Canadian National Railway passengers and mail could have been carried from our ocean ports to Winnipeg twenty-four hours quicker than by any other route. Yet this business has been lost to us. No wonder the Canadian National railway