

he has no great desire to visit other small cathedrals in Europe. The same principle applies when a man comes from Europe to New York, and then comes from that great metropolis to a Canadian city, his impression of Canada is not as good as would have been formed if he had come across the ocean direct to Quebec, Montreal, Halifax or St. John. Therefore, it seems to me that money spent for a service of sixteen knots, as mentioned by the hon. member for Centre Toronto (Mr. Brock), is money absolutely thrown away. Let us have a fast service, or let us not give Canadian money to secure any kind of a service.

Hon. Mr. ROSS (Victoria, N.S.) I wish to say one word in reply to the hon. member for Toronto (Mr. Brock). That hon. gentleman has overlooked the fact that railway travel is far more comfortable now than it used to be. On a train you can get as good a bed, I was going to say, as in most of our hotels, and quite as good a table. People are much more ready to travel by railway now than they were twenty years ago. I had the experience myself of travelling from Portland to Ottawa in 1867, and it was a very tedious, trying journey. There were no beds of any kind, and no comfort at all. But it is far different now. If you take the Intercolonial from Halifax to Montreal you will get as good table accommodation as in any hotel in Canada, and everything else in keeping.

Mr. HEYD. It is quite evident that there is a difference of opinion as to the necessity of a fast line service. So far as I am concerned, I am very glad that the government have failed, up to the present time, to make a satisfactory arrangement. I am satisfied that an expenditure of a million or a million and a half per annum to encourage a fast line service would be lost money, so far as the people are concerned. It is a matter of absolute indifference to ninety-nine men out of a hundred whether we have a fast line service or not. Whether we add to the comfort of the few people who may avail themselves of the opportunity to travel by such a line at the expense of the great mass of the people is a matter of no moment. If we have a million or a million and a half of dollars to spend for the encouragement of anything in this way, let us spend it in making the transport of our freight to the old country cheaper and more secure, and so develop that trade in which the great mass of the people are interested. Whether we shall ever be able to induce people, as some think we can, to come from New York and take the fast steamer at Montreal, is also a matter of indifference to the great mass of the people. What we want in Canada is to be able to place in the markets of Europe the products of our Canadian farms in the best possible condition and at the least possible expense.

Mr. LOGAN.

Mr. FOWLER. It seems to me that the most important feature in connection with the whole matter is the question of the freight rates. As I understand it from the figures given by the ex-Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Tarte), the cost of carrying freight from lake points to Montreal or other Canadian ports is as low as from the lake ports to the American seaboard, but the cost of transport to Europe is greater by way of the Canadian route than by way of the American route, notwithstanding the fact that we have an advantage, and a very considerable advantage, in distance. It seems to me it is the duty of the Minister of Trade and Commerce to apply himself to ascertain what is the cause of that great difference in the freight rates to Europe as between our Canadian ports and the American ports. If it lies in the fact that the insurance rates are higher, surely some arrangement could be made to obviate that difficulty and lessen the insurance rate. These insurance rates, it seems, have not lessened, or their lessening has not kept pace with the improvements on the St. Lawrence route or the improvements from St. John and Halifax. It is a matter of very great importance to us in the maritime provinces that the products of the great west, so rapidly increasing in quantity, should be carried through a Canadian port. I think we all feel, those from the west as well as those from the east, that if we are going to be a nation, we must carry our own foreign trade through our own ports. Therefore, it seems to me most important that this matter should be looked into and some way found of at least equalizing the freight rates. In fact, the rates should be cheaper by the Canadian than by the American route. It has been complained that the Minister of Trade and Commerce has not very much to do, that the department is a useless department. I understood—I was not in the House, but learned of the matter from my reading—that the present incumbent in this office spent many hours in this House denouncing the Department of Trade and Commerce as a useless appendage to the government. I suppose the reason the right hon. gentleman has not bestirred himself in the matter now before us is that he wishes to justify the statement he made when in opposition. He declared that the position of Minister of Trade and Commerce was useless, and he proposes to justify it by not performing any duty while he himself remains the incumbent of that office. It does seem to me that this is a matter of very great importance and one that has been too long neglected. I trust the right hon. minister will bestir himself and take steps to find out where the difficulty lies, and, having found out, will take steps to remove that difficulty.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. I am inclined to think that at