

MR. REID: Very well. In brief, over a distance of 1,242 miles, from Calgary or Edmonton going east, grain is carried at the rate of 43 cents per ton per one hundred miles, while the cost to Vancouver for export is 60 cents per ton per one hundred miles, and domestic use 90 cents per ton per one hundred miles.

I do not think it is necessary for me to elaborate what I have said, because I believe I have placed enough figures on the record to show the gross discrimination that exists against the people of British Columbia who wish to obtain their feed requirements from the prairie provinces.

As I have said, I am not pleading that parliament should fix railway rates. I have been met with the argument time and again that parliament is not a rate fixing body. Further, I am not going into the whole question of rate structure. If I took the time to do that, and placed on record figures showing express rates and other railway rates imposed against the people of British Columbia as compared with the rates imposed against the eastern provinces, I would show a most unfair condition indeed. At this time I am asking for equality of rates on grain and grain products; I am not asking parliament to fix rates. For the benefit of some hon. members may I say that the rights of none of the provinces will be jeopardized. This is not a question that interferes with maritime rights, the rights of the eastern provinces or any other rights. The plea I am now making is simply that parliament extend to British Columbia rights equal to those enjoyed by the eastern and prairie provinces.

Having by this time, I hope, placed the case for British Columbia in as clear a light as possible; having pointed out that mile for mile construction costs were lower, in British Columbia, that maintenance costs were lower, and that we have the lowest railway grade in the whole of Canada, I ask the minister or any other hon. member after I have concluded to refute any statements which up to the present time I have made. I suggest to the minister that in these days of compulsory co-operation it might be well to look into the fact that the Canadian National railway have the lowest grade. If there is any change made the Canadian Pacific should be compelled to take all their grain over the Canadian National line into Vancouver. Instead of, as has been suggested, dropping off a portion of the Canadian National line, if there is to be cooperation I suggest that the Canadian Pacific be compelled to use that low grade route. If this were done we might have a chance to obtain justice.

I now come to an important point in my remarks. Someone may say that it does not pay the railway companies to haul this class of goods. Let me say that I have it upon the authority of a Canadian Pacific railway expert that there is not one man in the employ of either the Canadian Pacific or the Canadian National who is capable of telling what it costs either railway to haul any given commodity. When giving evidence this particular person was asked if he could give that information, and he said he was unable to do so. In order to remove any doubts there may be in this connection I shall read the evidence. Mr. Flintoft is examining Mr. Lloyd of the Canadian Pacific Railway:

MR. FLINTOFT: What would you say as to the possibility of getting the cost of any particular commodity?

A. Well, we do not know; there has never been any system devised yet by which you can get the cost of carrying any one commodity.

Q. Mr. Lloyd, I want to know whether it is in your opinion possible to work out the cost of carrying any particular commodity?

A. It certainly is not possible to arrive at the cost of transporting any individual commodity.

This statement is reiterated, because I find the following:

Q. Would you say that that "average cost per gross ton mile" would be a fair figure to apply to the cost of moving grain in train load lots?

A. I do not know what the cost of handling grain is.

Q. Is there any information in your statistical department that will give you that?

A. We have nothing to tell us the cost of handling any commodity.

I am quoting, Mr. Speaker, from the general freight rates judgment delivered in 1925. So it will be seen that we have the railway experts admitting that no one can tell what the costs are. How, then, have the rates been arrived at? The answer is simply that a rate has been fixed, and having been fixed the railways take the attitude: We are going to hold to it. That is what it amounts to, Mr. Speaker.

I want to refer to one or two arguments that have been made in previous years. The Minister of Railways has used the argument that this House of Commons is no place to fix freight rates, and that it is up to the board of railway commissioners to determine what the rates shall be. But I could quote many authorities in proof of the statement I now make that it is useless for the people of British Columbia now to go before the board of railway commissioners and plead for a reduction of freight rates. I have here the evidence of Mr. McKeown, chairman of the board of railway commissioners, to that effect.