

6-7 GEORGE V, A. 1916

to which the industry is entitled. When you have a volume of business for which they will be competing, each anxious to secure his own share, and part of the other fellow's share if possible, they will all be cutting down their time—they will not be allowed to cut rates, they will always keep their rates the same. With regard to this question of express service, why should we pay the express companies double rates for the simple purpose of getting prompt delivery of our products? It is a tax on the industry and it is a tax which, naturally, is in the end borne by the consumer. The dealer who handles the fish on the markets and the retailer who sells it to the consumer each incurs additional cost, and that cost is simply carried down to the consumer. I can quite understand it is very difficult for gentlemen not conversant with the details of the business to see how it is that the fishermen down in certain districts can only get \$2 per hundredweight for certain fish and that the same fish costs 8 or 10 cents a pound to the consumer. It all comes in on this question of transportation, or at least an awful lot of it. Of course there is the question of handling a perishable product, a man is subject to loss not only of his profit, but also of his principal by reason of losing some fish. But if we can improve the transportation, if we can get lower rates on the transport of fish from the producing points to the centres of distribution so that the cost will be as low as possible, and not only that the cost will be low, but that the service will be improved and the fish carried in the very fastest possible time and delivered in the best possible condition then we will have made great progress. That one fact will help in the development of the fish business as no other possibly can because you will be delivering the fish to the consumer in better condition and that alone will tend to make him use more fish.

By Mr. Sinclair:

Q. Is there an objection to carloads of fish being taken on express passenger trains?

--A. There has been no objection, as far as I can remember, except that they would not carry more than one car through on the fast express from the Pacific coast. We can understand that might be for the reason that in climbing the heavy grades it would be difficult to make time if they had to carry too heavy a train. But there again that is a question of transportation. We have found, Mr. Chairman, that cars of fresh fish, emanating from Pacific coast points, ordered to be shipped by express and which were accepted by the express company, were not carried on a passenger train, but were put on what they call a special train made up of six, eight or nine cars of fresh fish, which were coming through to eastern distributing centres, and this train was supposed to run on express time, that is passenger train time, and it has happened that instead of that fish being delivered at Montreal in 108 hours, four days and a half, which was the schedule time from Vancouver, we got delivery in 144 hours, in six days, but no reduction was made in the rate. This fish was carried through on a fast freight service although they charged express rates, the train was made up of so many cars of fresh fish which was hauled to a certain point and then broken up at Montreal Junction or North Bay, where cars were switched off and sent down to Toronto. The company was simply giving a fast freight service on fresh fish, and charging us express rates, making us no allowance for loss of time in transit, the fish not being carried on passenger trains. That is what makes me think that if the fish business offers very often in the summer time sufficient volume at Pacific coast points to make up a train of seven or eight cars through to the east, there is no reason why we should pay express rates. We are paying express rates to-day, and the railway company is taking one half and the express company takes the other half, for what purpose? Not for any service they are giving us; the only service they were giving us was they were making free delivery at the points of destination, but they notified us that would be stopped. We are appealing to compel the railway companies to withdraw that notification and we have been promised a hearing by the Railway Commission so that we will have an opportunity of setting before the Commission our reasons why this rule should not go into effect.

D. J. BYRNE.