

Railway Act—Grain Rates

same as in the case of all grain and grain products moving from points east of Fort William to Fort William, such rates having been enjoyed by the people of the eastern provinces since as far back as 1897, and which were later reaffirmed with some changes in 1925.

I have delayed somewhat putting the bill before the house. Earlier in this session the Minister of Railways had some statement to make; he had been negotiating with the four provinces regarding a suggested change in the domestic rate, and for that reason I did not proceed with the bill until we had some idea of the proposed change. I wish now to deal for a few moments with that suggested change and to indicate why I have decided at this time to go ahead with the bill which is now before the house, asking this government to extend to British Columbia the same rates as those enjoyed by the eastern provinces.

The only definite information that has come to me is that the suggested change as intimated by the Minister of Railways is to be on feed grain only. No other intimation has been given regarding mill feeds or any other commodity in the grain line with the exception of No. 6 mill feed. That information I am also taking from a statement made by the premier of one of the four provinces, namely, British Columbia. He said that the average rate on domestic grains to the Pacific from the prairies was going to be reduced from 41½ to 31 cents, but there was a proviso that the reduction of 11.5 cents per hundred pounds would apply to Vancouver. Victoria would have the Vancouver rate plus 3 cents, with slight variations in connection with other points. The net rate to Vancouver would be thirty cents from Calgary and Edmonton instead of forty-one and a half cents from Medicine Hat. Before going into the matter I wish to voice one serious objection to this. It will be necessary for the consignees to surrender to the railway company a certificate from the deputy minister of agriculture to the effect that the grain is actually to be used for domestic purposes.

While we are pleased indeed to obtain any reduction in the rate on feed wheat we still think that this reduction is not even half a loaf, it is only a bite. It is to be granted only in connection with feed wheat No. 6. What about wheat No. 5 or No. 4? Both these wheats are recognized and are at times classified as tough wheat and used in the poultry industry. And what about bran, shorts, flour and the other commodities that are used? As is well known to many hon.

[Mr. Reid.]

members, including some lawyers of course, the poultryman or the dairy farmer could not carry on business without bran, shorts and middlings, the mill feeds which are a by-product in the manufacture of flour.

The bill now before the house asks that the Crowsnest pass rates shall apply. The Crowsnest pass rates cover not only wheat and flour but an extensive list of other articles as well. If this bill should pass we in British Columbia would enjoy not only the benefit of a cheap rate on feed wheat, bran and shorts and grains like that, but also on groats, oatmeal, pearl barley, wheat flour and barley sprouts. These commodities are all necessary in the operations of the poultryman, the dairyman and the stock breeder.

I would be very much surprised if the proposal offered by the Minister of Railways satisfied the people of British Columbia. I would be very much surprised if it satisfied the premier of that province. Undoubtedly we are all pleased to get reduction on feed wheat, but I have grave doubts that a reduction of fifty per cent of the export rate on feed wheat alone will please the people of my province, especially those engaged in the poultry, dairying and stock industries. If any reduction was warranted why did they not go the whole way and give us what we are asking for, namely, the same rate on both export and domestic grain? When grain leaves either Edmonton or Calgary for the east it has only one classification but when it goes west it is divided into export and domestic grain. The same train may be carrying wheat for export and wheat for use in British Columbia, but two different rates apply. I was informed the other day that the dairy farmers in Ontario could buy bran and shorts at around \$14 per ton while those in British Columbia have to pay \$28, just twice as much, and yet Ontario is farther removed from the grain fields than is British Columbia.

As I say, we are pleased at receiving any reduction but the injustice, the hardship and the burden placed upon the people of British Columbia because of the inequality of these rates are so striking and a reduction is so vitally needed that I feel I must press this bill. I know that the cry of sectionalism is sometimes raised, but if there ever was sectionalism it is contained in the acts of parliament concerning the provinces in the east. These provinces have received many more benefits than those granted to the Pacific coast. I sometimes wonder if British Columbia is not thought of by those in the eastern provinces as being peopled only with wild Indians and of course some wild Scotchmen.