

Mr. EULER: That is not an answer to the question.

Mr. FOSTER: It is a difficult thing to make a speech and, at the same time, to provide a programme for the government, badly as they may need it. I thought I had made it clear that there was a weakness in the Board of Railway Commissioners. I am sure I made it clear that I was finding no fault with the personnel of the heads of that commission, or with the chief operating officer, Mr. Spencer. I think he knows his business, but the men who come before that commission are the men who make the rates and they represent the rate departments of the two great railways of this country. I know some of these men. They are experts in their business, and the ordinary or extraordinary lawyer, no matter how great a reputation he may have before the bar, or the bench, or the Privy Council, is in a new field which he must learn from the bottom up in order that he may become proficient in handling that particular question. When those men from those railways come before the Board of Railway Commissioners, they come with a set programme asking for an increase of rates—they do not have to ask for decreases; they can decrease the rates themselves—and the railway commission says: You shall go this high and no higher. We have had rates going as high as 138 per cent, if the statements are correct that are made by some of the attorneys who have represented clients from the province of Nova Scotia before the railway commission. I have cited four increases of ten per cent, twenty-five per cent, fifteen per cent and forty per cent. I do not for a minute believe all the freight rate experts in this country are tied up to the two railways. If they are, and we want to go abroad for a precedent, let us get a few experts from the United States and examine the situation there as well. I think I have answered the question asked by the hon. member except as regards the policy that should be adopted. Possibly in the next twenty-five or thirty years you might be able to arrive at a policy.

The second point of interest to the Maritime provinces is "Canadian trade through Canadian ports and a complete recognition of the statutes and commitments of the parliament of Canada guaranteeing this Canadian policy." This country was asked to vote hundreds of millions of dollars for the building of a trans-continental railway to move the products of the east and the west, and we have had some discussion in this House as to the amount of grain that goes through the United States

and the quantity that passes through Canadian ports. Now I am glad that some grain finds its way through Montreal and Quebec and I should like to see a still larger proportion go through these ports. At the same time however I am anxious to see a good proportion pass through the ports of St. John and Halifax in winter. And that is more than a pious wish; it is only fair that it should be done.

Another thing I want to see in the interests of the province of Quebec and of the Maritime provinces is the establishment of branches of the milling industry at tidewater. One of the most important things in this country to-day is the development of the milling business in relation to the live stock industry, and there is no reason why mills should not be built for the milling of flour at tidewater. Some may suggest that this cannot be done. Why? Simply because the milling industry have made up their minds to erect their mills elsewhere. Well, the milling interests have come to this House in the past for legislation in one direction or another and I suspect that they will come here again. I do not suppose that I shall have any influence on this side of the House so long as hon. gentlemen maintain the position they take at present, but if the milling people of Canada ever come to this House for legislation, and I am here, where my vote is a factor, the one thing that I shall demand will be that they come to the ports and establish branches of their industry there.

We have in the Maritime provinces and in Quebec acres upon acres of land which will raise cattle and other live stock, but we cannot obtain the necessary feed from the by-products of flour. We subsidize the carrying of grain overseas and we have our milling done in the central part of the continent, but our freight rate on the railways is so prohibitive that the farmers of eastern Canada cannot afford to get the necessary amount of flour by-products, bran and middlings, to feed their stock. In the province I come from and particularly in the two counties I represent, we could do a splendid business in live stock with the Old Country now that the embargo has been removed, and instead of the Dominion shipping 110,00 head of cattle a year to Great Britain the province of Nova Scotia alone could export that number under proper conditions. Transportation is one of our difficulties, and the fact that branches of the milling industry are not operating at tidewater is another; and these two things must be looked into by more than a royal commission. Parliament itself must make up its