

Editorial

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PARLIAMENT AND RAILWAY RATES

EITHER Parliament or the Railway Board must have complete jurisdiction over the railways; both cannot run them.

In the building of Canadian railways, certain agreements were made with Parliament regarding rates. When the Railway Board was created all question of rates and existing agreements were made subservient to the Board's judgment as to what was a fair rate for both public and railway.

When Parliament restored the Crow's Nest agreement last summer, it arrogated to itself the right to say, over the head of Canada's Railway Board, that Western grain must be hauled to Fort William at a certain price even though that price was below proportionate freight rates of other commodities; was 25 per cent below American rates for grain, and was even below cost, which means that other commodities and other parts of Canada must make good any deficiency.

Mackenzie King knows that Canadian Railways were constructed, built, and paid for by CANADA as a whole and were declared to be "works for the general advantage of CANADA." That being so, Mackenzie King must know that he has no constitutional justification or authority to order the railways to haul a certain commodity, in a certain direction, at a certain price. The railways themselves, but particularly the Canadian National, which was not in any way a party to the Crow's Nest agreement, had no right as common carriers to submit to such outrageous discrimination.

Parliament's action so palpably smatters of a Liberal political trade for Farmer support that Mackenzie King should lose no further prestige by longer maintaining the agreement. Eastern Canada is chaffing under her extra burden, and certainly British Columbia cannot make progress under freight rates double those of other parts of Canada.

Irony is added to the situation by Western farmers now realizing the back-fire to their demands, in that grain is now to come West instead of going East.

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