

*Ocean Shipping Rates*

Every interest concerned denies that Mr. Preston was ever in touch with it. On page 4 he accuses the Canadian Pacific of having bought out the Elder-Dempster Steamship Company in order to destroy it as a competitor against the interests of the combine. Now, the Canadian Pacific Ocean Steamship service have issued a statement that the Elder-Dempster Steamship Company was purchased long before they were ever a member of the conference. I am prepared to accept the statement of the Canadian Pacific Ocean Steamship service, because I do not believe it would make such a statement if it were not perfectly true. Then Mr. Preston says on page 6:

According to the records of the Department of Trade and Commerce, a pronounced discrimination was immediately declared against Canadian ports and in favour of American ports as the settled policy of this steamship combine.

I do not know much about rates, but I do know that Canadian goods can reach American ports as cheaply in many instances as they can reach Canadian ports, and yet we find that Canadian goods are exported via Canadian ports despite the allegation that ocean rates from American ports are lower than from Canadian ports. I have not the statement before me but I think it will be found in the form of an answer to a question in to-day's Hansard that during the last two years less than three millions out of nearly three hundred millions of imports from the Mother Country came via Canadian ports. Now if there is discrimination in favour of American ports why would not more of these goods come via those ports? If there is that discrimination why is American wheat not exported via American ports? Why is the port of Montreal chosen? Think of it, eighty million bushels of American grain, more than one-half the total shipment from the port of Montreal, are shipped through that port in preference to New York, or other maritime ports in the United States. Why do we have that situation if the assertion in question is true?

Then on page 23 we find the assertion to which I have already referred, that the advantages intended to be given by the British preference have long since been swallowed up by the increased cost of ocean transportation.

The answer to that was given by my hon. friend from West York (Sir Henry Drayton) years ago and was confirmed by the Dominions Royal Commission page 11. There is a significant paragraph on page 25:

The conclusion is inevitable that a combine exists between all trans-Atlantic shipping lines running regularly between Great Britain and the continent of Europe and the Dominion of Canada.

[Mr. Clark.]

You will note that the whole Dominion of Canada is included; yet I say again that the western route has been once more given the go-by by this government. This simply adds to the record of the government's attitude toward British Columbia on the question of the mountain scale, the western grain rate and the customs officer at New York. And now we find in this Petersen agreement no provision for sailings from Vancouver. Judging from the rates charged on wheat from the port of Vancouver, one would take it that if there is a discrimination that discrimination is against the port of Vancouver rather than the port of Montreal. I find that the rates on wheat from Vancouver to the United Kingdom ranged between twenty-two and twenty-six cents for the first part of 1924, and were around nineteen and twenty-two cents from July on. The rates from Montreal to Liverpool ranged from 6.8 to 10.3 per bushel during May, June, July and August; between 8.3 and 9.3 in September; between 9.1 and 9.9 in October and around 10.6 in November. The distance from Vancouver to London is 8,852 miles while the distance from Montreal to London 3,241 miles. This would seem to indicate, as I say, that if there is any discrimination in ocean rates it is as against Vancouver on the western route. But no attempt is made by this government to take care of that situation. One more statement appears at page 26:

The effect of the administration or operation of the Atlantic steamship combine in connection with Canadian imports and exports is to almost isolate Canada from other parts of the world to which communication can only be secured by ocean route.

The extravagance of that statement needs no comment. There is one other statement which my hon. friend from Portage la Prairie (Mr. Leader) asks me to discuss, and that is the question of cattle shipments. At page 21 the Preston report states:

The tragedy of the Alberta cattle industry must be largely laid to the determination of the north Atlantic steamship combine to keep the ocean rate at an exceptionally high figure.

I suggest that the tragedy of the Alberta cattle industry must be largely attributed to the determination of the United States to enforce the Fordney McCumber tariff, and I will prove that assertion by the figures. In 1920 the number of cattle shipped to the United Kingdom was 479, the value being \$70,200; to the United States in the same year there were shipped 415,956 head of cattle, the value of which was \$41,226,445. In 1921 we shipped to the United Kingdom 131, the value of which was \$19,350, while to the United States we shipped 221,278, the value