

purpose of paying damages or anything in the future in regard to which no cause of action exists, which is the explanation the First Minister offered to the committee.

Mr. WELDON. Some time ago I made a motion in regard to return tickets. Has there been any action taken to extend the time within which return tickets are available? Complaints are still made in the papers in regard to that matter. I pointed out on a former occasion the inconveniences to which parties are subjected under the present regulation, and I had hoped the time would be extended.

Mr. POPE. The time has been more than doubled. We found the difficulty before was that they paid no attention to the time, but the time has been extended.

Mr. WELDON. There is another matter to which I wish to call attention. I hold in my hands a letter which I will read to the committee in regard to the carriage of coal from Spring Hill to St. John, as compared with other places. Here is the letter:

"DEAR SIR,—Will you please bring the following facts under the notice of the House as a specimen of the way we are protected in the Maritime Provinces. How is it that we in St. John are charged \$24.65 freight on a carload of coal from the Spring Hill mines a distance of about 164 miles, while a carload will be taken from Pictou to Quebec, a distance of 680 miles for \$10. You will see that this is not mere assertion as I have sent you the proofs.

"It is also true that we are charged as high or higher rates from St. John to places on this Intercolonial Railway, say a distance of 100 to 150 miles, than goods carried from Toronto and Montreal to Halifax. It does seem very unjust that we should be treated as aliens and foreigners when other portions of the Dominion have the full privileges of citizenship."

I may say that this is from a political supporter of the Government. Here is a bill of lading for \$24.65 on a car load of coal, which is a difference of \$14.65.

Mr. POPE. The rate to St. John for all manufacturers is the same, 85 cents a ton.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. What is the exact cost per ton per mile on the Intercolonial Railway from Spring Hill to Quebec?

Mr. POPE. The distance is 560 miles. On a car load of 10 tons, the freight would be \$16 and some cents.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. That would hardly exceed a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cent per mile per ton, which is a very low rate. In England a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent per ton per mile is considered necessary to pay expenses of transport. Does this rate pay expenses?

Mr. POPE. We get  $\frac{3}{10}$  of a cent, and when our cars are loaded back that pays well. I think that rate just clears it.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Does that allow anything for repairs?

Mr. POPE. When our cars are loaded back, we have enough, at any rate, to pay the wear and tear.

Mr. WELDON. When the hon. member for West Durham moved for a return with reference to the Intercolonial Railway this Session, the hon. member for Megantic stated he understood coal was carried on the Intercolonial Railway from Pictou to Quebec at \$10 a car.

Mr. STAIRS. I think the case the hon. member for St. John has made out is so extravagant that it carries its own contradiction. The idea that a car load of coal should be charged \$24.65 from Spring Hill to St. John and only \$10 from Spring Hill to Quebec is so extremely absurd that there must be some mistake. If you will take the rate mentioned, you will find that the car load carried at \$10 must have been a hopper car of 6 tons and the other must have been a car containing 17 short tons.

Mr. MULLOCK.

Mr. VAIL. What is the difference between the rate for coal from Spring Hill to Quebec, and that from Pictou to Quebec? Could the hon. Minister say?

Mr. POPE. No, I could not.

Mr. SHANLY. I think the Minister of Railways and Canals puts the case very gently when he says that we make nothing out of three-tenths of a cent a mile, and that it is part of the price that we pay for the luxury of running a Government railway. I have always been entirely opposed to the practice of running Government railways, even although we beat all other companies in the lowness of our rates.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. I would like to put a question to my hon. friend from Grenville (Mr. Shanly), because it bears closely upon the possible and probable future, not merely of this railway, but on a good many other questions of very grave importance. Would he, than whom nobody is better able to judge, say what he considers that such an article as coal might be carried for so as to clear expenses, making reasonable allowance for wear and tear, in his judgment? Three-tenths of a cent, as I gather from him, is too little. Now I tell him frankly why I want to get the information, because I do not wish to take him or the Minister by surprise. Very important questions are now arising in connection with the development of the North-West as to the conveyance of coal. If coal can be carried so as not to involve a loss at three-tenths of a cent on the Intercolonial Railway, where the grades are not very serious, it is quite clear that very moderate rates might be imposed—and I think in that ought to be imposed—in the North-West on the conveyance of coal along the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Mr. SHANLY. Do I understand my hon. friend to put that question to me?

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Yes. It is not regular, but I would like to have my hon. friend's opinion.

Mr. SHANLY. I suppose it is the liberty allowed in committee. I do not care what the advantages of a road may be, I think  $\frac{3}{10}$  of 1 cent cannot possibly be otherwise than a losing rate. In fixing the rate at which to carry coal, you must first know what the characteristics of the road are. Upon a road of good characteristics  $\frac{3}{10}$  of 1 cent might do, but it would be a losing business upon a road of worse characteristics. We must be entirely guided by that. But I know that the characteristics of the Intercolonial Railway are such that it is impossible that coal or any other freight can be carried over it for  $\frac{3}{10}$  of 1 cent per ton-mile, and leave anything at all in the shape of profit.

Mr. PAINT. When Mr. Brydges was at Halifax the Chamber of Commerce put the question to him, when he had the management of the Intercolonial Railway: What are you going to do with the empty cars? He said he was going to carry coal back, that he would utilise them for that purpose. Well, I suppose that is what the Government are doing at present. But there is this in the way. There are a number of steamships carrying coal for something over \$1 a ton to Quebec and Montreal. There is rivalry.

Mr. BLAKE. Do I understand the Minister to say that three-tenths of a cent per ton-mile is the rate that has been charged for some time from the mines of the West? Has that been cut down?

Mr. POPE. Yes.

Mr. BLAKE. Is the hon. gentleman quite certain that three-tenths of a cent is the rate?

Mr. POPE. Yes.