

every department of its work it is aided by the inspection and report of its own special and independent officers, and has not to rely upon the partial testimony of interested witnesses or corporations. It is a popular, common-sense tribunal where urgent matters may be disposed of without tedious delays and more irritating appeals. Unlike the old Railway Committee, it does not bring the individual to Ottawa at large expense to fight the wealthy corporation but holds its sittings as occasion may require wherever its work is to be done, from Halifax to Victoria, inspecting personally or through its special officers the conditions complained of and thus placing the poorest citizen who has a grievance on a footing of equality with the greatest railway corporation. When a Railway Company recently applied for an order to fill up a trestle bridge under which a farmer in the Township of Ancaster had a farm and cattle passage, and to replace it by a level crossing the farmer was able to state his case at the city of Hamilton, and because the application was not in the public interest but solely to save expense to the Company, the rights of the farmer were protected and the application was refused.*

But important as these matters are, and numerous as are the instances that might be given of the beneficial exercise of these powers, I desire to refer this evening more particularly to the tremendous effect of this Commission in dealing with tolls and tariffs, *the great questions of Transportation and classification of freight and the prevention of any kind of unjust discrimination*. Next to the power of a Government to foster trade and encourage wise industrial development by prudent tariff legislation, there is no greater force in existence for the advancement and protection of the trade and commerce of this country, the preservation of individual rights and the regulation of corporate railway oppression than the Railway Commission has proved itself to be. Coming into existence less than two years ago, on the 1st day of February, 1904, it has already issued over 1500 orders, tried out over 350 cases by public hearing, and by the fairness and justice of its decisions amply justified its existence and revealed the luminous foresight of the statesmen who were its authors.

The Railway Act requires that all the tariffs and tolls proposed to be charged for all the classes of traffic carried by any Company upon its railways or in vessels shall be submitted to the Board of Commissioners, who have the fullest power of approval, alteration or variation. Every detail must be submitted. Unjust discrimination is prohibited. Where any discrimination is shown, the onus is on the railway company to prove that it is not unjust or unfair. These provisions and the powers of the Board are elaborated in great detail in the Act, both export and local or domestic traffic, long and short hauls and the technical details of

* Anderson v. T. H. & B. Ry. Co., 3 Canadian Ry. Cases, 444.