

lest extent because of the great commerce—the great industry everywhere. Trains were packed to their utmost and the building of cars was being carried on as rapidly as possible. The various railway companies had built a large number of cars. The Canadian Pacific Railway and Canada Atlantic Railway and other roads had all they believed to be requisite, but they were found not to be sufficient to meet the demand of these gentlemen. The argument I made there, and the argument I make here now, is this: if railway companies are forced to supply an abnormal number of cars at one time for carrying any quantity of freight, and these cars are to lie idle at another period of the year, it creates a condition whereby the shipper pays a great penalty for the keeping of these cars idle, for the reason that the traffic has to be crowded into two, or three, or four months, which should extend over ten or twelve months, and that condition imposes a very great loss to the shipper because he is the man who has to pay for it in the end. I remember the argument used there very distinctly, that the railways should supply cars and supply them at once. It was asking for an utter impossibility. Our railways want to do all the business they can do, just as we as individuals want to do all we can do, but to ask for an impossibility is, to my mind, an absurdity.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON—There cannot be any doubt about that.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS—Of course my free trade views prevail always, and I do think that a clause like this, instead of being in the Bill, should be stricken out entirely.

Our railways are enterprises for the purpose of making money, if possible, for the stockholders, and they do not desire to neglect their business any more than we desire to neglect our business, and I for one am unable to see why conditions should be made to surround railways that do not surround other enterprises in this country. Some claim that these restrictions are justified because the railways are subsidized—well, why is a railway subsidized in Canada? A railway is subsidized in Canada because our population is so sparse that it is perfectly impossible to find private capital to build railways until Canada is very much more densely populated than it is to-day. Now the

subsidy that is given is a subsidy which should be commensurate with the requirements, and not a subsidy which means that the railway company is to pay back the Canadian people anything at all. The railway should only get such a subsidy as is right, and it should be under no obligation to pay back to anybody anything, and I dissent absolutely from the condition whereby the rates are fixed for railways by the government or any other tribunal in Canada. The proper condition, and the only true and sound condition is that competition should rule in all these things. That is the only true and sound position, and there are besides this clause, a great many clauses in this Bill hampering the railways, placing them under unfair conditions. The railways should be free agents, just exactly as manufacturers and commercial men are free agents. We have no right to legislate the rates for which railways shall carry freights any more than we have the right to legislate the price of wheat or anything else.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—I just wish to say a few words, and I do not need to apologize for saying them after the remarks we have heard with regard to the west. My hon. friend from Rockland tells us that railways are subsidized, and why? Because the settlement of the country is sparse, and the government have to subsidize railways to secure the service required by the people in the country. For that reason, we expect to get a service, because our railways are subsidized. The hon. gentleman from Wellington says we expect unreasonable things in the west. I wish to inform the hon. gentleman that last fall, when we were asking for cars, we were told they were required for Ontario and we could not get them. Last year the Canadian Pacific Railway placed all the cars they could at the disposal of the farmers for wheat. There was some little delay in the threshing season, and when they were holding the cars for wheat the British Columbia lumbermen complained, and the result was the British Columbia lumbermen sent down a deputation here and got a preference on cars for British Columbia lumber, and the cars were rushed over there. It got late in the season, and a cry was raised that people were going to freeze if they could not get coal, and the prefer-