

when the grain is running most freely—October, November and December—more freely than any other portion of the year.

*By Hon. Mr. Webster:*

Q. Would what you said about sending steamers to Montreal apply during winter months to St. John and Halifax, as far as the tonnage is available? I realize that the question of rail would come in, but steamers might be provided in Halifax and St. John in winter for the export of our Canadian wheat.—A. The winter service is quite a difficult problem. We now close navigation in Montreal about 25th November, and in Quebec the 5th of December. The regular lines then send their steamers to St. John, Halifax or Portland. There has always been a great deal of competition between St. John and Halifax as the winter ports. St. John has been extremely active in obtaining for themselves a share of the winter business, and they have been very aggressive. They have succeeded in building up the port and getting lines of steamers, and doing a considerable amount of business for the last twenty years, and they deserve a great deal of credit, because the disadvantage of the port of St. John from a shipping standpoint is a very serious one. Halifax is a good port at any time; it is easy of access and it is a shorter distance; but any vessel coming up the Bay of Fundy, with its extreme rises and falls, and the fog and ice, is much more dangerous, to my mind, than navigating the St. Lawrence at certain seasons of the year.

*By Hon. Mr. Thompson:*

Q. But very seldom accident happens?—A. We have had a great many accidents in the past, but navigation has improved, and it is a great deal better now, and St. John is handling a great deal of business; in fact the bulk of the grain in winter time is at St. John. You can count out Halifax altogether as a port, as every bushel of grain they try to ship by Halifax is going to lose a lot of money to the railroads. The rate of freight is based on the shorter distance to Portland. At St. John you have to haul it 200 miles further for the same cost. From Halifax you have to haul it twice as far.

*By Hon. Mr. Webster:*

Q. You would save that, as between Portland and St. John, by the Transcontinental?—A. It should be shipped via Winnipeg, to Quebec from Winnipeg down to St. John. I believe every bushel of grain that is carried through to Montreal for St. John is carried at a loss by the railway.

Q. As between Portland and St. John, is it not reasonable to suggest that this grain could go via St. John in preference to going via Portland?—A. Yes; I have always said that St. John has always got the amount of grain it could take care of; but Portland is a convenient port, it is a Canadian terminal, it is owned by the Grand Trunk, it is 297 miles from Montreal, and it is a good port.

*By Hon. Mr. Bennett:*

Q. What is St. John?—A. I think it is 440 or 450 miles.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. You have to bring it over the Transcontinental at present; it goes down to St. John via Montreal, and it goes to Portland via Montreal. As a matter of fact, the grain could be sent to Quebec, across the bridge, and down to St. John, which would be a considerably shorter distance; and when it comes to a question of all-rail, which it does in the winter, it is a matter of competitive rates, which makes a vast difference; the shorter route is operated for so much less.

*By Hon. Mr. Webster:*

Q. Going back to where the wheat comes from, say Winnipeg, the distance over the Transcontinental—a Government-owned railway—to St. John, N.B., should not