

American system of canals and to provide us a waterway from the head of Lake Superior through to the Atlantic, quite irrespective of American channels. Then came the rapid development of the Northwest by the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, followed after some time by the Canadian Northern, and now a third competitor, known as the Grand Trunk Pacific. This and other things demonstrate that a great trade is to come from our Northwest, and that that trade we should endeavour to have pass exclusively, if possible, through Canadian channels. And we should not be satisfied with the Canadian trade only, but should try to secure a part of the United States trade as well by drawing quantities of grain from the city of Chicago and from other American ports on Lake Michigan, as well as from those on Lake Superior.

Let us look at the facts for a moment that we may see what this matter of transportation means in the case of railways alone. I am told that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company give employment to an army of upwards of 30,000 men. That can only be due to the great transportation trade arising from their connection with the Canadian west. If our transportation trade is increased it means that not only will this great corporation give employment to many more men, but that the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific will do the same. It means more than that—it means a great thing for our Canadian vessel trade. And that trade may be made a very large means of employment, not only in the construction of vessels, but in running them. And here I may point out in passing that there is a great handicap upon Canadian vessels in competing with those owned by Americans.

In the first place, all Canadian vessel owners carry grain in the early spring and in the late fall of the year, but during the summer months there is little or nothing for them to do. There is the trade of carrying coal from American ports to the Canadian ports of Port Arthur and Fort William; but beyond that there is practically little or no business for Canadian vessels during the summer months. Any ore that has to be carried from American ports to Lake Erie can only be carried by American vessels, because Canadian vessels cannot go into that trade, which would be a contravention of the so-called coasting law, and of necessity Canadian vessels are compelled for the best part of the season practically to tie up, or to run at very low rates of freight. Now if we had at Port Arthur and Fort William large facilities for handling grain, and also at some other ports on the Georgian bay—because I am making the argument that that is the point where the grain trade must inevitably go—there could be stored large quantities of grain, affording Canadian owned vessels a large amount of trade during the summer months.

Now I am not going to complain that the government have not been fully alive to and seized of the facts in this case, although I think it is the opinion of most hon. gentlemen and of the public that the government have not taken hold of this matter in the manner in which they should from the outset. Nearly ten years have elapsed since hon. gentlemen came into power, and to-day we see to our mortification that the carrying trade between our Canadian ports is not on the increase, that the receipts of grain at the port of Montreal are yearly diminishing, and as I before stated to our mortification we find that with Canadian vessels capable of carrying grain in the fall of the year when the rush is on, with large elevator accommodation at the head of the great lakes, with a large quantity of Canadian shipping, we actually see the bulk of our Canadian Northwest grain going to Buffalo instead of being, as it should be diverted to Canadian ports. It may be due to the fact that the office of the Minister of Public Works has unfortunately been occupied by three or four different gentlemen, and that while one minister may have adopted a line of policy, owing to the fact that he afterwards left the office and was succeeded by another gentleman whose ideas were not consonant with those of his predecessor, there has been a break in the line of policy. But I say that in my humble opinion if the policy that was announced by the Hon. Mr. Tarte when he was minister, if a purely Canadian policy had been adopted, that would have been the best policy in the interests of this Dominion. Had that policy been adopted seven or eight years ago we would have seen to-day a larger carrying trade through Canadian ports than is now in existence. Now this was the policy of the Hon. Mr. Tarte at that time. Some seven or eight years ago I recollect that he made a visit to the town of Midland for the purpose of inspecting the port and viewing its capabilities, and the policy suggested by him at that time was in effect the same policy that is embodied in this report which the Minister of Public Works laid on the table a week or ten days ago. He pointed out that the Canadian Pacific Railway had a first-class line running from Peterborough to Montreal, that the Grand Trunk had a first-class system running from Belleville and Port Hope to Montreal; and his view at that time was that these two companies might possibly meet on a common ground and make an amicable arrangement for a common user of the line between Midland and Port Hope and Midland and Peterborough; and that if that arrangement could not then be made another arrangement be resorted to, namely, taking over that line of railway by the government, and then giving the different roads running rights over that government line. That was the policy that was announced by Mr. Tarte at that time. Well, I am not prepared to