

Probably the most important matter that the Council has dealt with this year is the Freight Rates Commission. The short reference in the report does not begin to give you any idea of the work done by the committee your Council appointed. Their report was able and exhaustive and deserving of your very hearty thanks. The Commission is still at work, and I presume, after the evidence of parties here is taken, the railway company will present its case. What the result of the Commission will be it is impossible to surmise. I will only say that I trust it will be some re-arrangement of the rates that will give relief to our farmers and lumbermen, without crippling the railway company.

I have dealt with all the important matters mentioned in the report, and will only add a few general remarks. I would draw your attention first to a gratifying peculiarity of the grain trade this year. In former years it took four or five months to handle, and ship and get returns, from the grain. This year the work was done in about two. This arose in part from the early harvest, but largely from banking, handling and railway facilities being so much improved. So quickly was our grain moved this year that before the Ontario millers, who are always buyers, appreciated the situation, there was little left for them to buy, and they have been making futile efforts to re-import from Buffalo, where there is a large quantity of Manitoba grain now under winter storage. The bulk of our wheat was shipped via Buffalo this year, there not having been sufficient Canadian bottoms available for this trade. Eastern Canada, and especially Montreal, must waken up, or they will lose the transportation of our grain.

Permit me to suggest that there are many pressing matters, not touched on in the report, that the new Council might take up. First, the waterworks and the sanitary condition of the city. We have had woeful evidence of our sad sanitary condition during the last year, and it cannot improve until we have a complete water system. This matter is vital for both health and fire protection, and requires immed-