

The same thing applies to-day. It is a foolish thing that our own Canadian Government, instead of getting their own agents or independent agents on the other side, confine their steamers to the "Cunard Lines" in Liverpool, and the Cunard Line are the agents. How are you going to get western-bound cargo if your agents are agents for the competing line, and own the competing line?

*By Hon. Mr. Turiff:*

Q. Are not the Canadian Government steamers also in the North Atlantic Conference?—A. I would not like to say they are.

Q. I have been told they are?—A. I believe the rates agree, but there has been some dispute about rates. I think I broke the rate last year, because I went to the agent in London and said, "it is ridiculous, you asking 80 shillings a ton for that cargo; it won't stand the trade; but if you bring it right down to a reasonable figure I think I can get you the business," and they brought the rate down. But it was infinitely better to get that cargo rather than block the business, and get a good revenue out of it. A great deal of our west-bound business coming from England has been prevented by the higher rates of freight, comparatively, that have been charged by the Atlantic Conference. A man in New York that has fine goods to bring out can afford to pay a higher rate for his fine goods; in fact he does not care what he pays so long as he can get the service; but that is not just, why we should be obliged to charge our people the same rate to bring this freight going to New York and thence to Montreal. There was a time when all the fine goods to Toronto came out by New York; we could not get a ton of that because they wanted the fine goods, and wanted them in a certain time, and they paid the extra cost.

*By Hon. Mr. Bennett:*

Q. Assuming that agents from Chicago should go to a market and buy one or two millions of bushels of grain, are there men in England who have the grain in lots of one, two and five million bushels and take it over there at any time they can place it there?—A. The shippers now are invariably the agents of London concerns. We have very few grain exporters in Canada. There are in Winnipeg agents of big firms that will buy 50 million bushels over the year if they can get it.

Q. Would it be possible, now that Canada owns the Canadian Northern Railway and a line of steamers, to give a through rate to Great Britain either from Montreal or Quebec or Portland, so that there would be no loss of identity of the grain?—A. Yes; I think they would prefer it as a matter of fact. It is a singular fact that years ago we had in Montreal ten or twelve shippers, but to-day we have only one or two, and in fact those are in and out—they are not in very often—but they come in occasionally and bill a few loads of grain; but if we want to buy grain to-day we go down to New York and get the agent of one of the big English companies. Nearly all the grain is picked up by the representatives, not in Montreal, but in New York, of those companies, who telephone to one firm, and one firm has booked up 75 per cent of all the grain that is exported and gets a small percentage, but he is not an exporter.

Q. Then Canada, owning those railways in the west, and being able to fix a low rate to the head of the lakes, and get what available shipping there is, if they get it at lake ports on the Georgian Bay during the operating season, let it freeze in, and let the vessels there hold it, which would dispense with the elevators, then, having their lines to Montreal and Quebec until navigation is closed, could they help to get a really close-cut rate for shipping from Portland, which has a Canadian railway, too?—it may be sentiment, but Canada owns the Portland division, the same as the Canals?—A. It does not make any difference so long as you can make it attractive to the shipper. He is the importer both in England and on the continent, and they have representatives that buy the grain, and when they buy the grain they get instructions whether it is to go to London, Liverpool, Glasgow, or wherever else it is to go.