

from the great American centres, and between American ports and European ports, and I am satisfied that if these were furnished to the people for Canada they would find a very great discrimination against Canada in the matter of long haul through-traffic rates, as compared with the rates in the United States. We in Canada have taxed ourselves liberally and cheerfully to build railroads from which our municipalities derive very little taxation, and I think it quite unfair that the rates from American points to the old land should be much less than the rates from Canadian points to imperial centres over those same Canadian roads. That handicaps our farmers, and I would like to ask the minister if he purposes giving the question consideration.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.
The hon. member has referred to me—

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). I meant the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I may say that on a former occasion this question was brought to my attention and I have discussed it a little with the officers of my department, and I hope to obtain certain statistics in regard to it, but it will take some time to get that information.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. I have paid a good deal of attention to it and I may observe to my hon. friend (Mr. Hughes) that as a rule the steamship companies complain that the service during the winter is utterly unprofitable, so unprofitable that if they did not make a little money during the summer, they would be compelled to abandon it. Of course, statements of that kind may be taken cum grano; but, there is no doubt that during the winter season, very little money has been made on the service from Halifax and St. John, and that it is substantially true that what they carry they carry at a loss. The House will of course recognize that, from the geographical configuration of our country, the railroad haul to American ports is very considerably shorter than the railroad haul to points on our Atlantic coast; and the old rule that ocean navigation is very much cheaper than railroad hauling prevails. Moreover, as my hon. friend very well knows, the American routes leading into New York have very great advantages, not merely in the equipment, which is a matter of expenditure, but in the grades. You can have grain carried at an extremely low rate from Buffalo to New York, because there are no grades of any magnitude to surmount. Under these circumstances, I do not know that we can hope to compete, with the superior advantages they possess, unless we subsidize.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). What I want is to get the facts, and then I am satisfied that public attention will be drawn to the very points the Minister of Trade and Commerce

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria).

and the Minister of Agriculture have brought forward, that it is a question of hauling, and that if we had our railroads constructed with very low grades, they would be in a better position to compete.

An hon. MEMBER. And fitted with ball-bearings.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Yes, and fitted with ball-bearing axles for freight cars. I am satisfied that is coming in the near future, and that the hauling capacity of locomotives will be doubled, or increased at least 50 per cent when the cars are equipped with the modern system of ball or roller bearings. I know that our rates are higher than the American rates; but I want the facts to be brought out, and, having found out the reason, we will proceed to reduce our grades.

Mr. ROBINSON (West Elgin). I think it is time that our railways and our steamships were so equipped that whenever Canadians wish to take a trip to Europe, they can find as good accommodation at Canadian ports as they can at American ports. I notice in reading the papers that whenever any of the members of our government, or any of our public men go to Europe, they go by New York. They are generally interviewed there by newspaper men, and they tell everything that has happened in Canada. I do not say that they have a private car to go to New York; they surely would not charge the country with that; but the Intercolonial is always at their disposal. During the summer they can sail from Montreal. Perhaps the river is not properly equipped, and they might be in danger in going down the river. If it is not, the Minister of Public Works or the Minister of Marine and Fisheries should have their attention called to the matter, so that our ministers' lives will not be jeopardized. Then, they can sail from Halifax, which is one of the best ports in America. Why do the ministers not set the example and sail from our own ports? It is time that their attention was called to this matter.

The MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE. If the hon. gentleman looks at the records, he will find that the Prime Minister set a good example, for he both went and came by the Canadian route.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. I wish to take issue with the statement just made by my hon. friend the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce. He has stated that we cannot, in his opinion, compete with the American railways running between Buffalo and New York. My hon. friend is mistaken, and the facts are there to prove that he is mistaken. The distance between Buffalo and New York by rail is 445 miles, not one more, not one less. The distance between Depot Harbour and the port of Montreal is, in round numbers, 370 miles; the distance between Midland and Montreal is 365 miles. Now, the