

matter to the point where it has to be dealt with by the government. For that reason I believe he is entitled to credit. Another factor which I believe did a great deal towards persuading the railways to make the agreement, was that they realized that great basic truth of all railway rates, that you cannot charge more than the traffic will bear. That is what railways have been doing for years past. The records show that the number of carloads of eggs—and you can put a whale of a lot of eggs in a car—shipped out of British Columbia in 1929 was 389, and in 1931 only 221. That is a reduction of over 40 per cent, a 40 per cent drop. That means that there are 40 per cent less cars for the railway companies to handle, and 40 per cent less opportunity to take our lumber on the return trip. We people in British Columbia have lumber we are anxious to sell. The railways say they cannot take it at a cheap rate because they have no empty cars and no return traffic. Here is a chance to get some return traffic, and an opportunity for us to sell our cheap lumber to prairie points where it is needed, places where the people can afford to buy only cheap lumber.

As I have said, if it is right that we should have a reduction, now is the time to have it. So far as I can see it is a case of now or never. The minister has stated that the premier and government of British Columbia have approved the agreement. He asks who gave the hon. member for New Westminster the right or authority to differ from the government of British Columbia. I will change that question, and ask: Who gave the government of British Columbia authority to agree to it? Let us go back to the country in British Columbia, and learn the views of the people. The government has to go there very soon, anyway. They are teetering on the edge of a landslide right now. When they go back to the people perhaps we will learn who gave them authority to sign away our rights in this matter. We hear talk about bringing the matter up at another session. How can we do that, when the government of British Columbia has stated the agreement is all right, and has placed its imprimatur on it?

Mr. MANION: I tried to make it clear that there will be nothing in the agreement arrived at by the government which will interfere with British Columbia or any other part of the country bringing up any other portion of the appeal, with the exception of the rates on feed grain, at any other time. In fact, may I state that this very morning I took the matter up with the chairman of the

Board of Railway Commissioners to make sure that in our decision we would do nothing in any way to prejudice the province of British Columbia.

Mr. NEILL: I am perfectly aware that there is no finality in the matter. Certainly it is open to us to bring the matter up another year. I was directing my remarks however to the mental or moral aspect of the situation. How would it be received? We would hear something like this, "The government agreed to it last year; here the British Columbia members are whining about it again; don't pay any attention." That would be the attitude. I do not say there would be any legal prohibition against us doing so; I am perfectly aware that there would not.

Now I approach the real crux of the situation, and that part of the subject which brought me to my feet. I rather think the bill might not have been pressed had we known what the deal is. We are getting a pig in a poke. We have never seen the pig, and have had but a very faint glimpse of the poke. What is the deal? The minister states that the hon. member for New Westminster is in too great a hurry, and that he should have waited until he learned about the deal. Yes, but why do we not know what the deal is? We want to know.

Mr. MANION: Until the deal is closed the hon. member cannot possibly know. The matter has to be closed before it is an agreement.

Mr. NEILL: The minister told us yesterday or the day before that all the provinces had agreed.

Mr. MANION: Yes.

Mr. NEILL: And that all that had to be done was to take steps to put it into effect. If he had stated what the agreement was, and had given us that information yesterday, so far as I am concerned, I might not be pressing the matter at this time because, at least, we would have known what it is. However we are asked to give up an opportunity to secure the whole loaf, and in return to get something about which we know nothing. The minister said that the hon. member for New Westminster talked about grades four and five, but that those grades had been included. However we do not know that.

Mr. MANION: The bill could have waited until later.

Mr. NEILL: There is such a thing as waiting too long.