

held only to their usual margin of profit, the latter would ere this have taken over the entire business, for it is a notorious fact that an extreme keenness in competition exists. In thus slandering Manitoba dealers, the opponents of the Government have overshot the mark.

It is unfortunate that statistics showing weight of merchandise brought into this Province cannot be obtained, as thereby the immense saving to the Province, through the reduction in import rates, would be made more apparent.

And again, Mr. Speaker, the benefits secured through the reduction on export and import freight rates are probably even exceeded in the advantages obtained through increased railway facilities. For a bonus of a little over \$600,000.00 we have secured the construction of 432 miles of railway, embracing the construction of the R. R. V. R., the Portage extension, the Morris-Brandon branch, and the C. P. R. branch from Kenmay to Melita. The latter line I include, as its construction was forced through the construction of the other lines; this is evident from a statement in Mr. Van Horne's annual report for the year 1888, in which he says: "The country along the Souris River is already well settled, and is suffering for want of railway facilities; and the early construction of the line is necessary, besides, for the protection of your interests in South-Western Manitoba."

The returns to the Department of Agriculture show that over 100,000 acres are under cultivation within ten miles distance of the C. P. R. branch line from Kenmay to Melita, and even a greater area within the same distance of the N. P. & M. Morris-Brandon branch; by the construction of these lines the farmers in that section will not have to haul their grain half the distance which they had to do before they were afforded these railway facilities. From a careful calculation, I have estimated that a saving of \$75,000.00 will be made in the marketing of the products of every 100,000 acres. The shorter haul will have the further advantage of enabling farmers to market their grain early in the season, before the close of navigation, when they can get the benefit of summer freight rates and save costs of elevator storage, interest and insurance involved in carrying grain through the winter season.

It is also worthy of notice that a considerable reduction has been made in local freight rates, averaging about 20 per cent.,