







UNEMPLOYMENT—FREIGHT RATES AND THE RAILWAYS

increase in traffic, and in the end, further reductions of

rates. The difference between giving a reduction to a "key

industry" rather than spreading over all kinds of goods is

illustrated in the case of a certain small railway which by

concentrating rate reductions on lumber enabled the mills of

that region to remain open and the people to remain at work.

whereas if the effect of the reductions had been scattered

over all the goods carried by that road each family would

have been able to save a small handful of silver in a year

(provided the decreased rates had been passed on as de-

creased prices by storekeepers)-but there would have been

sands of articles by the Traffic Departments of the roads.

In 1907 a substantial reduction in Eastern rates was made.

In 1914 a very material cut was applied in the West. So that

the transcontinental lines entered the war period with a de-

for low freight rates, there are certain limits beyond which

no one urges reductions. Of course there are theorists such

as Mr. Bernard Shaw, who believed that all railway service

should be free. But leaving aside views so far in advance.

as yet, of public opinion, it is assumed by most people that a

railway will give best service at least cost-because, of

course, even free railways must be paid for by the taxpayer

Now while all-even the railways-see the desirability

So much for the day to day reduction arranged on thou-

almost no employment!

pressed earning power.

The indicator of true prosperity is Employment. The presence of unemployed men, unemployed machinery, unemployed railway equipment, and unemployed capital in Canada is reason enough, therefore, for every large Canadian business to study its relation to the general problem—to see whether anything in its power remains to be done to advance the general prosperity of the country.

Carlos and

In this connection the railway companies have been specially interested. Freight Rates touch everyone, and, because they touch everyone, are always close to the public consciousness and more conveniently attacked than the true causes of depression which are less easily discerned and more difficult, if not indeed impossible, to control.

Furthermore, the railways while joining with everyone else in the general agitation of deflation of prices and wages-found the mselves recently in the seemingly anomalous

1. Freight Rates and Unemployment:

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With a large part of the world's population idle, or only partially efficient owing to wars or disturbed political conditions—with inventors in many parts of the world almost afraid to expose their inventions, organizers afraid to organize, capital hesitating to invest—a corresponding proportion of world production is missing. The total of goods available for the world is less than normal. Those who do not produce—speaking generally—cannot buy! Few purchasers few sales; few sales—little employment. This is the great world-wide fundamental of the unemployment situation.

The condition is international, not local to Canada. If Canadian railway rates were a determining factor in making the sale prices of our export goods, in other words if Canadian prices were higher in international markets than the goods of our competitors, then railway rates would be contributing to unemployment in Canada by depressing our sales abroad, lowering the number of our customers, and the orders coming to our producers.

But in the first place the real effect of freight rates on price making is a debatable point. This is proven

(1) by the fact that prices fell last fall after the rates were increased instead of rising as the retail trades had prophesied;

nessed,

position of demurring when it was proposed to lower railway rates. They were made to appear as though they were endeavtring with one hand to put wages down and with the other hand to keep rates up, thereby securing for their own treasuries instead of passing on to the Canadian public, any saving effected on the wage rolls. They were placed in the equivocal position of having urged blanket INCREASES of rates when wages went up and of opposing blanket DECREASES when wages were seemingly decreased.

The following statement is offered, therefore, with a view to exhibiting what the railways believe to be the true relation of railway freight rates to the question of unemployment, outlining the history of Canadian rates, explaining something of the groundwork of ratemaking and clearing up the seeming anomalies referred to, so that none may remain as possible causes for future weakening of confidence between the public and the carriers.

> the first 6 months of 1920 the volume of traffic on the most fortunately situated Canadian road fell 26.72%! And its revenue on this business, in spite of the higher rates, fell 11.14%!

The net result of these changes has been a state of emergency in the offices of even the most fortunately situated of all Canadian roads. Wages could be paid and bills met on time. Even the usual dividend was paid and a very slight surplus—one of the factors in maintaining the reputation of Canadian railway securities, was earned! But this was only done by deferring work that must ultimately be done on current account. Such economies cannot long be continued without eating too far into the broad safety margin which the Canadian roads maintain! Nothing but slackened speed of trains and reduced Canadian industrial efficiency can result if these savings have to be long continued. Falling traffic still further aggravates the condition. Maintenanee cannot continue to be sacrificed to protect the credit of our railway securities! Neither can be neglected!

In May the managements approached the task of reducing their wage bills. For the first time in many years it was the managements and not the men who were taking the initiative. They had been forced to adopt the war-time increases granted in the United States—where 92% of the membership of the railway unions lie. Therefore when the reverse movement was undertaken in that country the Can-

LOCAL ITEMS OF IN

Newsy Notes of Town and Country 1 Gathered by Graphic Report

HIG MOOSE. THE Lindford Jamieson and Wilfred Harry Cullis Gregoine weat to Red Pine last Thurs- foured from N. day tand Friday shipped a monster us C. N. R. S moose here, It weghed about seven Floyd has been hundred pounds depased.

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PLEASE RETURN, Will the party, who took the wheelbanyow from Mr. I. W. Stevens yard please return same at once or prosecution will follow.—iw.

FOR THE FAIR. All persona donating articles to the Sales. Committee for the Fair kindly teave same at Mrs. D. C. Gallon's not later than Monday, Sept. 26th. Dr. H. Bren for a Post Gr

COAL S. W. Dimock has both hard and soft coal of the best quality and at the lowest prices. Office Roseberry St., mean fire station.—Phone 256-8. Date Bay Mills

Big shipment of Tanlac just receivsed. Thomas Wean, local agent. BARGAINS.

If you want a Navy Blue Reefer for your boy call at Andrew's Clothing Store. They are exceptional values at \$6.00. All sizes from four to six years.

MEETING. A meeting of all those interested in the coming referendum election will be held at M. A. Kelly's office, Me-Donald building, Saturday evening, Sept. 24th at 7.30. Every election who desires to help is invited.

NOT A CANDIDATE. W. S. Loggie, M. P. for Northum berland, in announcing his integrion not again to be a candidate for paper liamentary homors, expresses his hope that the government candidate may be increaseful

HELPED HIMSELF. An auto owner who needed a spare tire last Friday night went up the alley by the Opera House and healped himself to Managen Christie's spare tire which was strapped on the rear of his car. Better lock youn tires on now.

LADIES! Please have your house and garden pleats ready for the big fair in aid of the Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, Sept 28th-Soth. We want all sorts of cut flowers and a large supply of forms, Rex begonias, peony roses, etc., etc. SALES COLLEMENT

(2) by the fact that a 10% reduction on western coal rates, offered in order to stimulate coal movement in the summer months, was followed by a drop in the coal tonnage offering instead of an increase.

In the second place, assuming for the purpose of argument they did have serious effect, Canadian export rates are lower and not higher than the rates in countries with which Canada may be compared. Mile for mile the haul from western Canadian points to the head of a navigation is cheaper than in the United States. The export rate on grain is lower than it was last August.

In other words, in international competition on her chief items of export, Canada is **helped** by her railway rates. So far as international trade is concerned, they are alleviating unemployment rather than aggravating it!

Inside Canada the same is true. Although it is a very difficult point to prove or disprove, the railways of Canada are sincere in claiming that, by and large, goods are carried more cheaply in Canada than in the United States. Canada had one blanket reduction of 5% last January, whereas there is still no decrease, nor immediate prospect of a blanket decrease in the United States!

11. The Trend of Freight Rates:

With the exception of war and post-war conditionsthe whole tendency of freight rates in this country, as in any other progressive country of its kind, is downward. As Canada's population rises, as our industries multiply and the density of traffic becomes more nearly like that of older countries, some of the principal costs of railway service can be subdivided among a greater numbr of shippers and travellers, levying on each, therefore, a smaller fraction of these costs than before. For twenty years prior to the war, traflic was on the increase. For tweny year, therefore, the railways have been adjusting rates downward-quite apart from special decreases put in effect by the Board of Railway Commissioners. These revisions have been skillfully applied by experienced, practical economists-that is, by the Freight Traffic experts of the railways, whose business it is to know all branches of industry intimately, so that the benefit of these voluntary rate adjustments would go to "key commodities," thus stimulating further growth of the country,

—when their managements are allowed to show their mettle by meeting the obligations of their properties out of their earnings. It is usually recognized that these obligations fall into two groups:

Group I.—To pay their employees; to pay for current supplies of materials such as coal, etc.; to pay for repairs and replacements.

Group II.-To pay such a wage or hire for the use of the capital which built these railways as will make Canadian railway securities always desirable, and easily marketed whether as bonds or stocks. This involves more than the mere payment of the established rate of dividend in the case of privately owned roads. It involves the earning also of some surplus-a safety margin of income over expenditure, which will assure investors of complete safety. This principle of a surplus was definitely established by the judgment of the Board of Railway Commissioners in 1914, under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Drayton-and upheld by its judgment of 1920, when the matter was again considered exhaustively. On this principle rests Canada's ability to enter the money markets wherever she may need and feel confident of bringing back funds for extending her railways as she may require in the future.

War conditions, following the Western and Eastern rate adjustments, brought the railway managements sharply up against these fundamental problems. Comparing the Government's figures for 1907 against 1919-the last year for which the Railway Blue Book is available-the wage bill of the railways rose 306%! Coal 345%! Ties 320%! But neither the volume of traffic nor the scale of freight rates increased in comparable degree during that period! The actual revenue per ton per mile (which is the real proof or disproof of the matter) advanced only 20% over 1907. The year 1920 enlarged the discrepancy, although an increase of 35% on Western lines and 40% in the East was supposed to yield enough additional revenue to meet the increased wages. The increased wages were effective from May 1st-the increased rates not until September 1. The effectiveness of that increase depended on the volume of traffic remaining at a fairly high level. It did so for a time, then began to drop. Today it is very low. Neverthess a 5% decrease was applied in January. For the first 6 months of 1921 as compared to

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236 St. James Street, Montreal, P. Q.

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adian roads at once gave due notice and a provisional and conditional decrease of roughly 10%—corresponding to the same movement in the United States—was put in effect, tentatively, as from July 15th. This reduction has not been accepted by the United States membership of the unions, where a vote is being taken on the question—nor by the Canadian membership, who have applied for a Board of Conciliation. Every resource of the managements will be used to sustain this imperatively necessary and only too moderate reduction of their wage bills—which account for 60% of the cost of operation—they are compelled to regard the matter as still unsettled and therefore not to be considered as a basis for the reduction of railway rates—a view which a majority of the Board of Railway Commissioners has just expressed in its judgment.

111. In Conclusion:

The railway management welcome deflation of railway rates and are working toward that end. On two grounds, however, they asked that any general decrease be deferred:

First.—Because this so-cg ied wage decreases are not yet assured and cannot be unt., the parallel decreases in the United States, where 92% of the union membership lies (and where no general freight rate reductions have been ordered), are settled.

Second.—Because the volume of traffic in the immediate future is problematical and any serious decline, if coupled with a decrease in rates, would have very grave effect on even the most favorably situated managements.

The railways have spoken against blanket decreases on the grounds that it would be in the interest of the country as a whole to concentrate any beneficial effect to be expected on "key commodities" rather than distribute them over all classes of goods, thereby benefitting only the distributors.

They have been actuated throughout by the desire to assist in the process of deflation—objecting only when that process might seem to threaten their solvency and injury them—and through them—the ultimate interests of the Canadian public. SALES COMMITTEE. CAN DETECT IT. A citizen says that a sum of money malled without registration was evidently detected in ipansit by some dishousest person and appropriated for money in a letter as its presence is easily detected. NOTICE Officials of the warnings to in was that the u was that the u solution of the second was that more solution of the second was that more solution of the second of the s

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