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THE DAILY NEWS

PRINCE RUPERT - BRITISH COLUMBIA

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PRINCE RUPERT'S PLEA FOR REDUCED RAILWAY RATES LAID BEFORE BOARD RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS YESTERDAY.

(Continued from Page One).

If this inequality were removed a much greater volume of business in that particular territory would be done.

In the territory contiguous to Prince Rupert there is an abundance of timber and mineral that is rapidly coming under actual development. It can be said, without any doubt, that the transportation costs now in vogue are seriously handicapping the development of these industries. For instance, at one time, in a spirit of co-operation, a rate was put into effect on coal of \$3.40 a ton. The Granby mine and local industries used considerable Alberta coal under that rate, and a substantial volume of business was given to the railways as a result. In 1922, for some reason, and without any notice to the users of coal here, the rate was increased to \$4.40 a ton. The direct result of that increase in rate was a loss of a substantial volume of this business to the railways. The Granby mines ceased using this coal in its entirety, and are now purchasing their coal in the State of Washington and barging it to Anxoy by boat. I cite this as an example of the fact that transportation costs, when increased, will have the result of depressing the volume of business that a railway can do.

Just why our rates should be higher than they are in Eastern Canada or on the prairies is a mystery to the people of this section of the country. We are aware that the cost of operating the railway along the line of the Grand Trunk Pacific in British Columbia is no greater than it is upon the prairies, and less, by a considerable amount, than it is in Eastern Canada. There are no mountain grades to contend with on the G.T.P.—the grades are even more favorable in British Columbia than they are upon the prairies. At the coast terminals there is no serious winter weather to contend with such as exists upon the prairies, nor is there such a thing as alkali water, and there are other advantages in the form of the suitable distribution of track-making materials such as ties, and ballast, that are more favorable to the road in British Columbia than they are in any other part of the country. Certainly, if we are going to settle and develop trade in and out of Prince Rupert, we need the co-operative assistance of the railways. In fact, we need all the co-operative assistance that we

can get. We are not in a position to carry the burden of unnecessary handicaps in the form of mountain grades. We are in direct and active competition with the Port of Vancouver, and unless it is the intention to divert all the prairie business to that port, we have got to secure a recognition of the fact that on all competitive business we must receive the same rates as Vancouver receives. We have secured the recognition of this principle in export rates.

Not a Concession

On which Prince Rupert, although the distance is greater, secures a rate from Edmonton and other competitive points that is the same as the rate to Vancouver. On the face of it, this might appear to be a concession to Prince Rupert on the part of the railways. It is, I believe, merely the adoption of a principle in rate-making that has universal application. For instance, the rates on grain to St. John, which is four hundred and seventy miles further in distance than Montreal, is only increased by one cent per hundred pounds over the rate to Montreal, and Halifax, where the distance is eight hundred miles further than Montreal, takes an increase of only two cents, but in view of the fact that by reason of superior grades and curves, the train can be operated in here from Red Pass Junction at a train mile cost that absorbs the two hundred extra miles. We contend that in asking for equalization with Vancouver from points west of Fort William that we are only asking what is ours by virtue of being a terminal in competition with Vancouver.

Having these facts in mind, we do not think that we are asking too much. In fact, we are not asking for any special favor when we ask the board to recognize the competitive influence existing between Vancouver and Prince Rupert, and to direct the railways to recognize that if Prince Rupert is going to function as a port, it must receive the same opportunity for doing business that Vancouver secures in the matter of transportation costs. Our volume of business is not as great as the volume of business done out of the Port of Vancouver by any means, but in a statement that was filed by Sir Henry Thornton, a copy of which I have secured, it is interesting to note that, in 1924, the Canadian National Railways drew east out of Vancouver 104,083 tons of freight, while from Prince Rupert east the tonnage drawn was 181,978 tons. That is, the originating of tonnage on the branch Vancouver for the eastern movement was very much less than the originating tonnage on the Prince Rupert division

Centre of Northwest

There is no reason why Prince Rupert should not become, in addition to its activities as they are carried on here today, the commercial and industrial centre for a substantial portion of the northwest, but it is doubtful, for my way of thinking, unless rates are generally reduced, that we can look forward to any substantial measure of progress. Something is holding this northern country back. Something is preventing men from taking advantage of the opportunities to develop trade that exists in this section of the country. There is little or no inducement for the settler to take up our lands and until the railways, not only by reducing rates, but in other ways, show an active and a healthy desire to co-operate with the settler, the miner, the fisherman, and the manufacturer, we cannot expect, and in fact, we will not secure, anything like the development that should be taking place. If it were not for the fact of our very substantial fishing industry today there would be little justification for the existence of Prince Rupert in its present size. As an instance of discrimination against the pioneer farmer in this district compared to the treatment accorded those in the older sections, I respectfully refer you to the potato rate from Ashcroft on the Vancouver branch as compared with the rate from Moricetown on this division, the mileage in both instances being the same. Ashcroft pays 20c per hundred pounds, Moricetown pays 29 1/2c. This, to my mind, fully illustrates the failure of the railways to realize that it is the pioneer who needs the assistance and not he who is located in the established district. I believe it was the late Mr. Jim Hill who made the statement that every farmer he put along the line of his railway was worth to him in revenue a thousand dollars annually. Present day railway management would seem to think otherwise as their efforts would seem to encourage people to remain or come to the more settled parts of Canada.

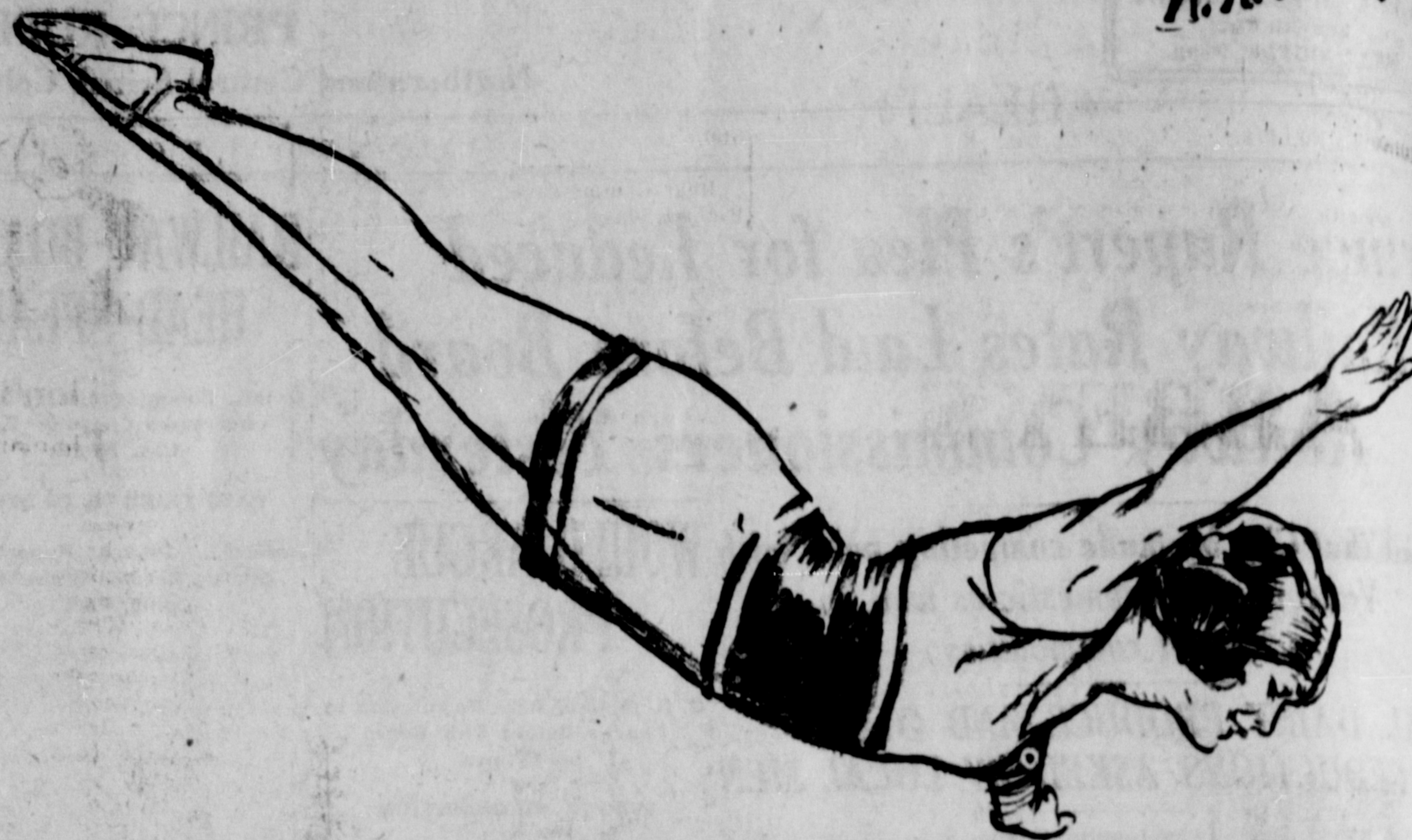
I am filing with your board a comparative statement of the rates charged on a number of commodities that are essential to the life of this community and showing the differences in the rates that we believe are a serious handicap to us. For instance, the rate on grain and flour from Edmonton to Prince Rupert is 50c as against an export rate of 21c, and as against a domestic rate to Vancouver of 41 1/2c. Forty tons of grain or flour moving from Edmonton to Vancouver gives to the railway a gross return of \$400, and I understand that the Canadian National Railways has admitted that its cost of handling a carload of grain from Edmonton to Vancouver is approximately \$125. If that is so, there can be no justification for a rate of 50c to Prince Rupert. We are at least entitled to the same rate as Vancouver receives if we are not entitled to the same rate that would be available to the man in Japan who uses Alberta grain or flour. Similarly, our rates on other commodities are out of line. For instance, Edmonton, a distance of 956 miles, with the same rate from Halifax to Findlay, Ontario, a distance of 960 miles. We pay \$3.35 where the man in Halifax pays \$1.76, or a difference of 97 per cent. That is on fresh or frozen fish. On smoked or cured fish, we pay \$3.60 as compared with the man in Halifax who pays \$2.10, or a difference of 71.4 per cent. It can hardly be said that it is because we lack density of tonnage in fish, because I think we provide a great deal more tonnage than do the cities of Halifax and St. John combined, and I do not believe the consumption of fish in Findlay, Ontario, can be any greater than the consumption of fish in the City of Edmonton.

Only Conclusion

Also, it can hardly be said that water competition in the East is the compelling force in this difference in rates. The only conclusion we can come to is that the railway companies have decided to put a rate on our business that prevents our doing the volume of business that we are entitled to participate in. It does not matter what line of endeavor we are in, when we compare our cost of transportation with the cost of transportation elsewhere, we find that our rates are very much higher than are the rates in other parts of Canada. The lumberman suffers, the farmer suffers, the miner suffers, and if it is the intention of the railways to continue their operations on the limited volume of

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business that they are doing today, one of the surest ways of their succeeding is to continue the exactions in rates that they are the present time taking from the people here. The country cannot develop and will not develop under our present system of transportation costs.

For these reasons, the Prince Rupert Board of Trade is supporting the government of British Columbia in its application to your board for a general revision of freight and express rates on all railways in this province. We believe the time has come when a general revision downward in our rates is not only essential to our own future progress and prosperity, but is necessary to give the railways that volume of business that is necessary for their own upkeep.

To be Forgotten

To most people in Canada, Prince Rupert is looked upon as something to be forgotten, that there is not now or never was any justification for its birth, such conclusions are arrived at through ignorance, and while it is true that the construction of the Panama Canal had nullified some of the advantages that Prince Rupert as a terminal

joint would have enjoyed over any other Pacific point, the natural resources are still being waiting development. This is the only Canadian port where it is possible to centre a large amount of American goods for distribution, not only to American cities, but to the markets of the world. I refer to the trade of Alaska.

The following memorandum was from M. Valentin, dairyman: Some years ago I came to Prince Rupert and decided that there was an opportunity to establish a dairy business. I recognized that there was little or no opportunity to maintain a dairy industry in the immediate vicinity of Prince Rupert in the form of a dairy farm and that our milk and cream must be brought from the agricultural sections of the community some considerable distance from this port.

Our supply of dairy products is not produced within two hundred miles of Prince Rupert, but it is produced within two hundred and thirty-five miles of our city. Strangely enough, the rates that are available to us on a production within two hundred miles of the city are 42.8% higher than those enjoyed in prairie territory. For instance, two hundred miles out of Prince Rupert the rate on a five-gallon can, which is the standard unit used, is 60c. On the prairie the rate is 42c, or a difference of 18c. If we were able to produce dairy products and cream within this area, our situation would not be nearly as bad as it is, although even at that, it would be bad enough. The rate, as I have already pointed out, from two hundred miles out of Prince Rupert is 60c per five-gallon can. We do not enjoy this rate because nothing is produced

at that point or within that mileage. We get our cream from Telkwa and points further east. Telkwa is two hundred and thirty-five miles from Prince Rupert, and we pay a rate of \$1.30 per five-gallon can, or considerably more than 100% more than we would pay on the mileage basis within the two hundred mile zone.

There can be no justification, in my opinion, for the difference in these rates, unless it be an expression of an arbitrary attitude on the part of the railways to insist on taking what the traffic will bear, irrespective of whether the traffic moves or not.

Natural Centre

Prince Rupert is the natural centre for Northern British Columbia. We not only should be able to secure cream for our local requirements, but we should have established in Prince Rupert a dairy that would produce butter, not only for Prince Rupert, but for the whole of this northern coast area. If I could secure the prairie rate on cream to Prince Rupert, it would mean a rate of approximately 55c from Telkwa. I am satisfied that I could produce all the butter required in this city and that I could supply a substantial portion of the requirements of the surrounding country. I would provide a market for the dairy products of the farmer in the agricultural territory immediately contiguous to Prince Rupert, and I would provide the railways with a volume of business that they are not getting today.

At the present time, the dairy product producer in the agricultural lands contiguous to Prince Rupert is in direct competition with southern business, and he is also in direct competition with

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