

Merchants Advised to Take a "Broad View"
—Cases of Discrimination— Four
Rates on Lime.

The interest which St. John mer-
 chants take in the new I. C. R. freight
 tariff was very well illustrated Thurs-
 day. On ordinary occasions it is not
 always easy to secure more than a
 quorum of the board of short notice
 when the meeting is held. On Monday
 yesterday morning that Manager Harris
 would like to meet the members there
 was no need of a special messenger.
 The secretary had some difficulty to
 get chairs enough to seat the crowd,
 representing every branch of the
 wholesale trade.
 And in many respects Mr. Harris
 came down handsomely. The tariff is
 not nearly so bad as it was. Still, it
 will be seen that Mr. Harris was not
 unmindful of the interests of Mon-
 treal.
 J. McLaughlin, president of the
 board, called the meeting to order.
 Mr. Harris, who was accompanied
 by Divisional Freight Agent Robert-
 son, expressed the pleasure it gave him
 to again meet the citizens, and said
 he expected to come to the provinces
 for the next month, and spend a couple
 of weeks knocking about among
 all the patrons of the road. Taking
 up the new tariff, he explained that
 when he took charge he found no
 regular system existed, but that many
 different rates were charged on the
 same class of goods. He had endeav-
 ored to frame a tariff on some basis
 that would be fair to all, and to de-
 velop trade to Upper Canada and
 United States points. To do this it
 had been found necessary to lower the
 rate on what are known as goods of
 the first and second class, and slight-
 ly to increase them on the third, fourth
 and fifth class, goods, and to elimi-
 nate the remaining classes. In the
 maritime provinces he met a system
 of rebates in force, and in doing away
 with them he had tried to make the
 new rate as near the old as possible.
 It had been necessary to establish the
 weight system, which was in vogue ev-
 erywhere else, because it was found
 that in many sections the rolling stock
 was being damaged by being heavily
 overloaded.
 Mr. Harris then went quite fully
 into the lumber tariff. He said the
 minimum of weight was 30,000 pounds.
 On logs for spool, etc., or, on
 deals or other heavy lumber, the al-
 lowance of 6,000 lbs. per car was
 made. The tariff was framed on the
 basis of what the road earned under
 the old tariff. In some cases there
 would be an increase and in some a
 decrease, but on the whole the charge
 was not more than before.
 With regard to shingles, where the
 minimum weight was stated to be 20-
 000 lbs, if a car would not carry more
 than 4,000 lbs. the charge would be
 for that quantity. The new tariff
 lowered the rate on shingles to United
 States points so much that some
 shore shippers said they could now
 resume the business the U. S. tariff
 had crippled. By special arrangement
 with connecting lines he had been
 able to give rates to Boston, New
 York and into the ports in the east-
 ern states that would be of great ad-
 vantage to shippers of shingles, and
 railway ties. He was trying to find
 markets for his railway and give the
 people an outlet and a chance to de-
 velop their resources. And the great-
 est consumption of shingles was at
 interior points, not at seaports. He
 spoke particularly of New York state.
 As to St. John, he had not heard
 that there was a special rate on mixed
 cars of merchandise. He would,
 therefore, give a special rate on mixed
 cars from Quebec to 5, and would of
 course give the same concession out
 of Halifax. But as the rates now
 being made larger, he would like to
 see the minimum rate raised from 20-
 000 lbs. to say 24,000 lbs. He would
 like to hear their views on that point.
 As to the rate on lumber for ex-
 port, the rate on lumber for export
 were getting a higher rate for hauling saw-
 dust and mill waste. The rate on 50
 miles was 3c, per 100 lbs., or \$12 for
 40,000, and 6,000 lbs. excess of weight
 was allowed. The rate was nearly 10
 per cent. lower than on other roads,
 and to shipping on former rates.
 As to shipping lumber by weight,
 he could see no reduction in weight
 everywhere else, and now there was
 there as low a tariff. He spoke
 of 1,750 cars of lumber being shipped
 from three stations in Quebec to
 Portland for export, a distance of 250
 to 270 miles, at 10c per 100 lbs., weight
 25,000 to 40,000 lbs. per 1,000 lbs. al-
 lowed for excess, as compared with an
 I. C. R. rate of 71-2c per 100 lbs.
 with 6,000 lbs. allowed for excess. Mr.
 Harris condemned the former system,
 which he claimed permitted overload-
 ing, and escape from a portion of the
 just charges. He took occasion also to
 denounce the steamship companies,
 who in carrying deals from Halifax
 and St. John charged a higher propor-
 tionate rate than those from Quebec
 and Montreal. People here went for
 the railway, but he proposed to go
 for the steamship companies. Mr.
 Harris was emphatic at this point,
 and banged the table, declaring he
 would inform the people that people
 that he would withdraw the export
 tariff unless they gave the shippers
 here the same advantage they gave
 to shippers from Montreal and Que-
 bec. He would like the board to get
 the facts and take hold of this
 question. In proceeding, he said a great
 deal of goods went via Portland
 to South America. He would not
 see why it should not go via St. John.
 In conclusion, Mr. Harris said he
 would like the merchants to give the

the result would be all right.

James F. Robertson remarked that the present rate on dry goods to provincial points was lower than the old one.

J. Willard Smith pointed out that the rate on lime to Halifax had been increased \$8.00 per car, and that the tariff under which that had been done was withdrawn he could not get any rebate. He would like to know if any change had lately been made in the rate.

Mr. Harris replied that since March 1st the rate to Halifax was 10c. per 100 lbs.

Mr. Smith replied that that would be 3 per car lower than the old rate, and that he was very glad. But he had also got some plaster from Hillsboro. The old rate was 30c., the new one 55c. The rate by water was 10c. per barrel.

Mr. Harris did not think the rate had been increased. However, Mr. Robertson, the divisional freight agent, was always reliable and could make a special rate if necessary to secure business. They were here to get business, not to lose it.

Mr. Smith further observed that Mr. Scott's furniture company had a lot of dry goods to ship to St. John, but the new rate was prohibitive and they had arranged to have it brought by water.

Mr. Harris made no comment on this.

W. H. Thorne said he was very glad to hear that there would be a special rate as before on mixed dry goods from St. John. Mr. Thorne drew attention to the case of Mr. O'Leary of Richibucto, who, as stated in his letter to the Sun, had to pay the first-class rate on a whole car. Under what class, asked Mr. Thorne, would mixed cars now go?

Mr. Harris—Fifth class.

Mr. Thorne—Then the rate on Mr. O'Leary's car would be 13c. instead of 15c. as he paid. But Mr. O'Leary states that the old rate was only 9c. to Kent Junction.

Mr. Harris replied that there was an increase in fifth class goods. While on the other rate is the same or lower on classes 3, 4 and 5, it has been drawn up. They had to be governed by the basis adopted by other roads, or they could not make through rates. They wanted to get into closer contact with the west and develop through business. They had made reductions. The rate on classes 3 and 4, and some others had been lowered, and the present basis would have to come up to meet what was being done by 3, 4 and 5. The present basis was necessary in dealing with western cars.

Mr. Thorne directed attention to the fact that St. John's chief competitor was Montreal, and while the rates had been raised, those of Montreal had not. We were, therefore, handicapped. For instance, the rate on less than a load lots to Campbellton was 27c. from St. John, and 25c. from Montreal.

Mr. Harris thought not. The rate from Montreal was 32c.

Mr. Thorne produced a tariff and pointed out that what he stated was correct.

Mr. Harris said the rate on cement, iron pipes, fire claid and some other goods from St. John was 10c. per 100 lbs. Mr. Thorne said the rate was less on some goods, but what our merchants were most interested in was lumber.

Mr. Harris here explained that the tariff which Mr. Thorne had was real—the summer tariff, which had been issued about a month earlier than the competition. Montreal had not issued a tariff for mixed cars.

Mr. Thorne pointed out that that was not the tariff.

W. S. Fisher said the commodity tariff on an article which his firm manufactured placed that article in class 3, while the same comes from St. John at all provincial points as class 4. This was a discrimination against us.

Mr. Harris replied that this had been remedied on Wednesday in Montreal, and the goods would now go in class 4. (But there is no reduction in rates under the old tariff, and the new tariff has the same rate as class 3 under the old.)

W. S. Fisher read the following statement that had been placed in his paper:

"Formerly lumber from Hampton, N.B., per 100 lbs., with 20 per cent rebate, making a cost equal to 10c. per M. The new tariff rate equal to 75c. per M. It will thus cost lumber to St. Martins and freight to St. John by schooner. Total cost of lumber using Parkers Road to John's Bay, Hampton, \$1.87 1-2; formerly, \$1.12 1-2. Can put car to St. John via St. Martins for \$1.25, saving 2 cents. Two hundred cars could be brought this way."

Joseph Finley said the old rate on lumber to Montreal was 11c. Now, if it would be increased to 12c. on the highest class goods in the world it would be an increase of nearly 2 cents per gallon. He lost a sale through the increase.

Mr. Harris said the rate had been increased. Montreal is a water point for high water is now 10c. He proposed to meet the competition and drive the railway out of that in twelve months the railway would capture a deal of business from water.

Finley pointed out that the C. would take molasses to Montreal for the L.C.R. asked \$30.00. Robertson said 15c. was a high rate on molasses from the Indies and did not apply to the warehouse.

It was intimated by Mr. Harris that a matter could be adjusted. Concerning the matter for this year he would let the manager of the car lots 10c. per lb., but would ask them next to make it 24.00 lbs.

Harris discussed the rates on iron—already contracted for over 100,000 tons by rail from the Intercolonial Mining Co. and from Springfield, Ontario and Joggins. The rates were standing by him, and could be cheaper to the people in consequence. He expected to bring a deal more to St. John. The Dominion Coal Co., complained in Nova Scotia he was after business. As whole.

doms in many instances, and though the people should not complain because there are some increases. They should look at it from a broad basis. He would like to feel that the board of trade was at his back.

Geo. McKean at this stage produced a statement of freight paid on timber and lumber, which showed an increase of about three per cent. As an instance, Mr. McKean said that Amherst man's deals were not worth over \$7.50 in Halifax. The railway had no right to increase the rate. The trade could not stand it.

Mr. Harris figured it out, and showed that the rate was increased by excess the rate from Amherst to Halifax would now be about \$18.90 per car compared with \$17.50.

Mr. McKean said that 6,000 lbs. of course would make a difference, but on short distances was too high. Mr. McKean remarked that Mr. Harris was talking in a very simple manner when he talked about the steamer getting a big share of the freight. The regular steamers took very little. Deals were taken by steamers and shippers chartered by the shippers themselves, and the rate had no relation at all to the freight rate. He also raised the question of charges on cars of lumber waiting for discharge, and the possibility of having lumber on hand when steamers came.

Mr. Harris said that could all be arranged with Mr. Robertson, who had asked him about it.

J. A. Likely asked why the rate on coal from Springfield to Sussex was \$1 when the rate to St. John was 85c. An industry about to be started there had asked for a rate and he had quoted \$1. They had asked why they could not get the rate to St. John rate.

Mr. Harris replied that St. John they had water competition. At Sussex they had not. Continuing, he pointed out the cheap rate at which coal is carried to Montreal. He had reached out to Chicago and captured the market for buying business, and knocked out the Erie company. He believed there would be from one to two hundred thousand cars of corn brought by the I. C. R. to lower province mills this winter. The cars had to go west again, and he had abolished the flat car in the north coast trade, and carried it in the bulkhead box cars. It cost around a low rate on the coal. The business he would take away from water competition would make the road pay. If points like Sussex got a rate they could not complain. The present rate was lower than the old one.

Mr. Likely said he would give Mr. Harris credit for one thing. It had never been possible before to get a number rate from the north shore, but this winter lumber had been brought by J. F. Robertson New Mills for export.

Mr. Harris said he was glad that this was a gratifying statement. There had long been a desire to get a rate that would enable north shore men ship through St. John in winter.

Mr. Fisher again called attention to discrimination against St. John in connection with the matter of ore in connection with the general merchandise of classes 3, 4 and 5.

Mr. Harris contented himself with talking around the question and urging the merchants to consider the matter in its own light, and as to the question of the rate. There were reductions on some class of goods, while Montreal did not enjoy the privilege of mixed cargo. He thought the merchants ought to object by him.

James Robertson asked if it would be possible to restore the old rate of the classes referred to.

Mr. Harris said it would not without raising the rate on others, and settling the whole plan of the tariff. They had to do certain things in view of what they were doing in the west.

Mr. Merritt discussed the lumber crisis, and hoped the matter would be satisfactory; also the matter of demurrage. He also referred to the increase of the minimum charge on all articles from 25 to 35c.

Mr. Harris replied that this was not without his knowledge, and had once been cancelled when he heard of it.

Mr. McLaughlin pointed out that under the system by which lumber is carried it was not possible, as Harris had suggested, for shipper to load cars and evade payment of full freight.

Mr. Merritt, Mr. Robertson and Mr. McLaughlin expressed appreciation of Harris's courtesy in going into all these questions with the board, and meeting them adjourned.

RATE ON LIME

Mr. Harris stated in reply to J. McLaughlin that the rate on lime at Halifax since March 1st was 10c per 100 lbs. At four o'clock yesterday afternoon Mr. Smith called up the I. E. R. and asked the rate on lime to be 12c. This was told him, a contradiction of the fact that the rate was 10c.

A Sun reporter who called on yesterday afternoon, Mr. Smith there had been three different rates on lime from St. John to Halifax since January 1st. The old rate was \$7. The new rate was \$8.30. He said that on three cars and one set of wheels. Then a rate of \$23.30 was set. Now Mr. Harris says it is \$24, and the people at the I. C. R. freight office had not yet learned yesterday.

Mr. Smith said Mr. Harris says it has been raised since March 1st.

Mr. Smith also pointed out that several of furniture from Bass River are to be brought here by the Beaver and stored for shipment to St. John river points. The reason could not ship by the I. C. R. because of the rate on plaster from Hillsboro. The rate on plaster from Hillsboro has been raised, despite Mr. Harris's protest on the point.

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