

carload lots. Here, we are faced with rate increases such as the 288 per cent increase for potato chips. I have several potato chip factories in my constituency. The hon. member for Victoria-Carleton (Mr. Flemming) also has some in his constituency, although their product is not as good as the product from my constituency. There is the 369 per cent increase on canoes. We do not have many canoes, but we do have furniture and motor boats. When there is a 400 per cent increase in the rate on shoes, then the maritime area cannot avoid being affected adversely.

The hon. member for York-Scarborough (Mr. Stanbury) paid attention to this debate and showed his interest in it. But, this is not just a case of the people from the maritimes crying in the dark. Previously freight rate increases were required to be justified before they were imposed. In the old days, the railways were required to appear before the Board of Transport Commissioners. We were assured by the predecessor of the present minister that nothing drastic would happen and that the study of maritime transportation problems would be completed before any action would be taken which would hurt the maritimes. We spoke in favour of the transportation bill. We brought in many amendments, but we appreciated that in order to have uniform legislation across the country some parts of the country must be hurt. The illustrious predecessor of the present minister gave us certain assurances. I was one of those who tried to point out to the minister why we should vote for this bill in principle, even though we were left unprotected.

It has been only a matter of a few months since the dire predictions were made, and now they have come true. I do not wish to run out the clock, because I know the minister wishes to reply. Perhaps the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Stewart) wishes to reply, as well as some other members from the Atlantic area. Hon. members on this side of the house were prepared to go along with the transportation bill on the assurances of the minister. The minister appreciated the fact that the special transportation problems of the Atlantic region required special study. I hope the new minister understands the implication of the remarks made by members on this side of the house. Even the report of the MacPherson commission recognized that the maritime area needed a special study. This report came in, and then before action could be taken on it the railways moved in to cut us off. As I say, this is operation blackjack which will adversely

Rate Structure on Freight on Maritimes
affect what has happened in the Atlantic area in the last ten years.

I wish to be non-partisan, but I must say that unless the minister exercises his discretion and individual talent, which sometimes brings forth protests from this side of the house, and changes these less than carload lot rates, the Liberals will become lost in the east. Regardless of what the minister says tonight, members on this side of the house will be anxious to see what concrete action is taken to relieve these immense increases which affect the east. Even though we do not have a great deal of manufacturing, that which we do have will be cut off before it has an opportunity to expand.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to the grievance which has been expressed in the house tonight. I must say I have certainly had impressed on me the fact that my new portfolio is a very important one, certainly to the maritime provinces. It may be one that is not any easier than my previous one. I suppose only time will tell. I have also been impressed by the unity of the maritime members in their presentations. I might say, for the benefit of those maritime members on the other side of the house, that those on this side of the house had already made representations to me personally. I appreciate their having done so.

Mr. Crouse: I noticed that the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Stewart) spoke to you tonight.

Mr. Hellyer: This made it unnecessary for me, under the circumstances, to take up additional time in the house.

Mr. Fairweather: What did you say to them?

Mr. Hellyer: I said to them the same thing I am going to say to you.

Mr. Fairweather: Priority in due course.

Mr. Hellyer: This has, in fact, been a crash course in respect of transportation and the requirements of the maritimes. It certainly has been an acceleration of my education in respect of this very important subject, and naturally I am grateful for it. I am sympathetic to the needs of the maritime provinces. Notwithstanding what one or two of my hon. friends on the other side said, if one were to examine the statistics one would find that I have taken a number of actions which have