

natural from his standpoint. A few may be making money. Perhaps he has reference to the persons who are interested in the rum-running business in Nova Scotia. I ask if the hon. member is satisfied with farming conditions. Is he satisfied to have hundreds of farms throughout the province deserted—the houses boarded up—the once productive land now growing weeds? Let me tell the hon. member that, when he states that there are no deserted farms in Nova Scotia, he must be extremely ignorant of conditions in relation thereto. I assert from personal knowledge, and without fear of contradiction, that there are hundreds of idle and deserted farms in the province and that they are being added to every week of the year. Colchester county is one of the best farming districts, and I say to the hon. member, and to this House, that there are scores of deserted farms in that county, and that such property is practically unsaleable. What can be expected of an hon. member of this House who tells us that he is satisfied and that the Maritimes are getting all that is coming to them? Real estate in Halifax is dead, unsaleable, business is unprofitable, a few industries remaining are suffering, all taxes are increasing, the people are leaving—our fishermen are handicapped by heavy freight and express charges, and the Canadian National Railway is not paying its fair proportion of taxes. For these and many other unjust conditions we demand a remedy, which remedy however, is not likely to be brought about or even asserted by the hon. member for Queens-Lunenburg. Is he satisfied to witness scores of men, women and children waiting for hours their turn to reach the counter of the American consulate to obtain the necessary papers and passports to enable them to cross the line into the United States?

The position of the Maritimes has of late been forcibly placed before the rest of Canada, and I rejoice to say that our western neighbours are expressing themselves with great sympathy. Members of this House are sympathetic and, more than that, are willing to help right the wrongs. The press throughout the whole of Canada is assisting. We realize the importance of this and greatly appreciate their efforts and interest. We are making our demands with the full expectation that they will be granted.

I have a remark or two to make about the government's reference of Maritime matters to the Board of Railway Commissioners. There is a fundamental principle in this matter which the government is attempting to escape from. I will tell the House what

it is. Back in 1903 and 1904 government and parliament, and the country supporting them, settled upon a national railway policy. That policy consisted in the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific and the National Transcontinental railways at enormous cost to the country. Not contented with pronouncing what the policy was to be and what it would do, the government and parliament embalmed it deliberately and clearly in the agreements that were made and the statutes that were passed in respect to those railways. I can correctly describe the policy without delaying the House with quotations by saying that it was a national transportation policy for Canada, Canadians, Canadian business and Canadian ports. It was summed up in the pledge of the government of that time that trade would be forced on Canadian soil and through Canadian ports. There were to be no half measures. The years 1903 and 1904 were to be years of a new transportation epoch for Canada. This was the settled national policy of the country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what do we find. This great national transportation policy is to be whittled down to cold-blooded consideration by a tribunal of judges. It is to be submitted to a law court. The Board of Railway Commissioners is a law court. It has nothing to do with or no power in regard to national policies. It will have nothing to do with national policies. There is only one tribunal in this country to settle national policies. That tribunal is the high court of parliament. I protest therefore with all my strength against the government's scheme to evade the country's national transportation policy, settled twenty years ago, recorded in agreements and printed statutes—by referring it now to a law court. I say that the government cannot and dare not abdicate its own and parliament's functions by such an attempt to escape from responsibility. I say that parliament must be honest with itself and with the country, must be true to its engagements and must see to it that the national transportation policy is carried out in good faith. The Maritime provinces demand this. They will be satisfied with nothing less.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, with all the emphasis I can command that a national policy of the magnitude and importance to which the country is committed cannot be, and must not be submitted to the tender mercies of a cold-blooded law court which has no authority whatever to deal with national policies.

I want to show the House further that the reference of these matters to the Board of Railway Commissioners is nothing but a sham. It is designed to blanket the Maritime