

*Transportation*

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** The companies are given an invitation: "Come in, the water is fine, provision has been made by parliament." The minister shrugs his shoulders. He cannot believe that the railway companies would ever think of doing that.

**Mr. Woolliams:** That is his deal.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** This is a preposterous posture on his part. He shrugs his shoulders. This action is dangerous. This is doing what the rules provide shall not be done. I know with what heavy hearts the minister and those associated with him viewed the vote the other night. If that had happened when we were in office they would have howled to high heaven, "Resign". I can just hear the refrain. They are trying to get away from what happened the other night. It was one of the sharpest blows this government has had. Judging from the number of members on the government side now it would seem that it had its beneficial results.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I think, sir—

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Sir, the ruling is clear. Surely, Mr. Chairman, you will not allow the Minister of Fisheries, by a subterfuge in wording, to do what this committee turned down.

The same argument has been made by the hon. member for Calgary—

**Mr. Woolliams:** Bow River.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I beg your pardon. I mean the argument of the hon. member for Bow River. The names of constituencies have been changed so much that it is difficult to know exactly what each constituency is in Alberta and elsewhere.

We challenge the right of the minister by casuistry to do that which the rules deny. I say to the members of the Liberal party that what they are doing in this connection shows their purpose in the original section 329(1) which was turned down. They are trying to put themselves in a position whereby these rates can be challenged not mandatorily but at will.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I wonder whether the right hon. gentleman would permit me to say something. I know he does not want to mislead. He realizes that the rates cannot be challenged at all, that the investigation provided for has nothing to do with the rates. It has to do with the revenues and costs.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Chairman, that is no question. This is another of those dolled up arguments of the hon. gentleman. He is trying to explain something about which he has a bad conscience, and with some reason. If this amendment is carried I say to the government that they will have even greater difficulty in western Canada explaining why they deserve support. Indeed, I would think that that paragon of political perfection—I say that in the most commending way—the premier of Saskatchewan, may again find it necessary to utter words of criticism regarding this government.

● (4:10 p.m.)

How dangerous this amendment is is shown by the western agricultural conference meeting at the Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg at the present time. The annual meeting of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture will conclude on Thursday, January 26, and I have received a message underlining precisely the point I am trying to make. Ever since his defeat in the committee the minister has been trying to explain. He had some of his departmental officials in Winnipeg explain how beneficial section 329 would be. They had not read it or they would not have been misled. The telegram I have received, and I leave out no portion of it, reads as follows:

Western agricultural conference of CFA in session in Winnipeg disturbed by press reports about parliamentary vote on section 329 of the transport Bill C-231 and urges all parties assure that final draft of the bill provide that statutory freight rates continue to apply on all prairie grains including rapeseed and grain products moving from prairie points to export positions at all terminal locations at Lakehead, Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Churchill at levels which existed on December 31, 1966. Please find opportunity to assure western farmers on this matter before Canadian Federation of Agriculture annual meeting adjourns on Thursday, January 26.

James R. McFall, Secretary, Western Agricultural Conference, Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg.

That is what we are trying to do by means of arguments such as those advanced by my hon. friend from Bow River. We are trying to assure the western farmer that this kind of monkey business will not be countenanced. That is the reason I rose today, to point out to you, sir, that if an amendment of this type can be allowed, then all that is necessary, when the government has been defeated on an amendment, is for it to make a few changes and then come back and say, whether it is almost the same or not, we have something new; there are more words in it. However many more words there are may be the danger is still there.