

Transportation

in order to give another example of discrimination which we are not prepared to accept.

When the government uses the taxes of all the citizens of the country to enable residents of Halifax, of Newfoundland, of New Brunswick or of any maritime province, to pay only half of what the citizens of Montreal or Quebec pay for transport, we are ready to accept that state of affairs, because we consider that the maritimes need help.

It is clear from the figures just quoted by me that the cost is lower in the maritimes for any delivery from points in western Canada or Ontario than what it costs us in Montreal or Quebec.

But it is wrong, inconsistent, irrational and unfair discrimination when after December 12 of every year, ship captains are told, as happened this year in the case of Russian ships reaching the port of Montreal: You have no right to load grain in Montreal. This was reported to me by Canadian and foreign ship captains whom I met in the past week. They are told: You have no right to load grain or wheat in Montreal. If you wish to return to Europe with grain or wheat, get to the port of Halifax in ballast where you can load grain before returning to Europe.

While the Canadian government is paying for the transportation of wheat by railroad from Montreal to Halifax, the ships reach Halifax empty to take in freight there.

But that is not all: the same ship captains will tell you: What stupid things happen in Canada. While the grain elevators are full in Montreal, we are told to reach Halifax in ballast and take in freight there. At present, the average waiting period for ships is six days. The ships reach Halifax empty, while there is still wheat and grain in Montreal. They are empty when they leave Montreal for Halifax. Then they stay there idle for six days, waiting for the grain to reach Halifax from Montreal. And since the shipments are slow in getting to Halifax, the ships have to wait.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Transport will agree that it is irrational, illogical. If ships are ready for loading in Halifax, the grain should get there in time. If others are without freight in Montreal, they should be allowed to load there instead of wasting time and money to get to Halifax and wait there before crossing over to Europe. This is a ridiculous system.

• (9:20 p.m.)

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to hear what the hon. Minister of Transport has to say on some more figures I am going to quote.

Subsidies are granted for all sorts of commodities. For instance, commercial lumber, timber, boards, studs, plywood, etc., are moved in full carloads from British Columbia to Montreal—an average of 2900 miles—at \$1.43 per hundredweight whereas full carloads of our Quebec lumber make the Abitibi-Montreal trip—an average of 500 miles—at 43 cents per hundredweight which is twice the cost of bringing western lumber in to Montreal.

Why does it cost twice as much to move lumber from Abitibi to Montreal as it does from British Columbia?

Here sitting next to me is the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Allard) who is aware of the fact that in the eastern townships, Princeville, Beauce, Plessisville, etc., where maple sugar is one of the main resources, this product is shipped at a cost of \$1.10 per hundredweight every 340 miles. Why this double standard? Why these special rates?

Mr. Chairman, these rates and subsidies are presently determined by certain individuals who are in a position to make arbitrary decisions in favour of certain parts of the country at the expense of other areas.

These regulations, these rates are published only in English, as the minister knows. The special rates and the subsidies are not published in French but only in English. I have copies of them here, identified by codes known to those who want to use them: CR 200, CF67, CG 130, CG 180, CG 223, E 140 and CRA 6, those are codes to recognize the special rates benefiting all other areas of Canada but not Quebec. In Quebec, we pay full price.

Well, Mr. Chairman, due to such rate differential, the transport of merchandise from British Columbia to Montreal weighing the same as merchandise from Abitibi for delivery in Montreal would cost less. Our maple sugar, a source of wealth for the Eastern townships, does not benefit from any subsidies. Elsewhere, though, subsidies are granted.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) should answer this: Why are ships forbidden to load a cargo of wheat or grain in the port of Montreal? Why must they go to Halifax empty and wait there five or six days before loading wheat because none is available?

Can the Minister of Transport reply to this? The ship captains themselves gave me the information.