

Seaway and Canal Tolls

proposal is adopted the government will be placing a further harness on industries in southern Ontario, and to this I take exception. This afternoon we heard that this proposal will also affect the primary producers in western Canada. We are interested in every aspect of the Canadian economy and we must have something to say in regard to what the authority is going to do when its proposals affect our economy from coast to coast.

I noted in an article a day or so ago that this matter was discussed in the Ontario provincial legislature, and I agree totally with the views of the prime minister of that province who spoke in very strong terms against the proposal. The headline on the article read, "Robarts Denounces Seaway Proposal to Levy Tolls on Welland Lock Traffic." I object generally to the application of such a toll because of the effect it will have on the province of Ontario. If we had the opportunity to present the views of the western provinces, of the central provinces and the eastern provinces, in view of the economy as it stands today we could come to no other conclusion than that the lockage levies on the Welland canal should not be tolerated.

The other day when making a statement in this house a government minister said that a certain situation had to change because we are living in 1966. Simply because the initial levying of charges by the authority was authorized some years ago, in order to conform to a certain program, is no reason why we should continue with them today, particularly since we would be acting counter to some of the policies and programs launched this year by the government. This is a responsibility of the government.

I disagreed with what the government house leader had to say. I do not wish to speak on the urgency of debate or other things which have been determined, but I am not prepared to accept the contention that we could have treated this legitimately through some other method of debate. The government has a practice of waiting until it can pull the wool over our eyes, and I am very pleased that we had this opportunity to have this debate today.

I am not being proud or boastful, or anything of that nature, when I say that the province of Ontario contributes more to the coffers of this nation than any other province in the Dominion of Canada, and we in Ontario need every consideration to ensure that

[Mr. Winkler.]

our competitive industrial position is not affected. The people in western Canada need the same protection. I have the same feeling with respect to secondary industries in the province of Quebec, although this proposal may not affect them to such a serious degree. I also welcome the contributions made to this debate by members from the maritimes.

We simply cannot tolerate to have any outside authority make arbitrary decisions on something that will affect the economy of this country in such a serious way as the proposed toll charge increases. I hope members of the government will have the intestinal fortitude to back policies that will assist our primary and secondary producers, instead of selling them out to someone else who then will have an advantage over us.

Mr. R. R. Southam (Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, coming from western Canada and representing a farm area I feel impelled to make my contribution to this very important debate this evening. Before continuing, however, I want to join with the hon. member for Rosthern (Mr. Nasserden) and other preceding speakers in congratulating my Saskatchewan colleague, the hon. member for Kindersley (Mr. Cantelon), for moving this motion, and its seconder, the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Forbes).

We are experiencing today a worth-while debate which is in the best interests of Canada as a whole. To emphasize the importance that I place on this question, for the sake of the record I would like to draw the attention of the house—even though I am always reluctant to quote myself—something which I said in this house on February 10, 1966, as reported at page 1042 of *Hansard*, during a debate on transport, when we were dealing with other matters such as box car shortages:

I should like to mention in passing another matter which has exercised us in western Canada recently. This is the suggestion that the St. Lawrence tolls be increased. I am not going to deal with this but I do want to say this for the record in passing.

The Canadian wheat producers see higher seaway tolls as a direct charge against the farmers' take home pay. Mr. Charles W. Gibbings, president of the Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pools made these views known as spokesman for 160,000 prairie farmers in a brief presented to the seaway authority recently.

As I say, this is a matter of deep concern to western Canadians and I hope that the minister, when he is formulating his policy on this question, will take this into consideration, as well as what I have said with reference to the shortage of box cars, with particular emphasis on this excessive use in the United States.