

The Budget—Mr. Bryce

Returning to the subject of school districts, however, we have these settlements established with no provision for the pupils and no teachers to look after them. We have the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation pushing the construction of new homes in urban districts such as I represent. In the suburban municipalities of St. James and West Kildonan many new homes have been built within the last few years, but the school districts concerned have been given no help to enlarge their schools to accommodate the children coming from crowded city areas. These school districts are in financial difficulties now trying to make ends meet. Some of the old schools are out of date but cannot be replaced because of lack of funds. Some time ago the *Winnipeg Tribune* published photographs showing the dilapidated condition of a school built in my constituency sixty years ago. It was falling apart; it was a regular fire trap. After I saw the photographs in the newspaper I visited the school; and I do not think the gentleman who wrote the article exaggerated in any way.

What is the solution to this problem? The law of the land says every child must have an education; and it must be remembered that today people are demanding better educational facilities for their children than they themselves enjoyed thirty or forty years ago. I know education is a provincial responsibility; we have heard that in this house repeatedly. But the situation is getting beyond the provincial governments. If teachers were paid proper salaries some of the best scholars would be attracted to the teaching profession, but that is not the case. If our school districts are to have sufficient funds to build extra schools or enlarge the present buildings, if every child in every province is to have the opportunity to get an education, then I say it is time we had a dominion-provincial conference on education to see what help the federal government can give the provinces or the school districts to permit them to carry on their work in a satisfactory manner.

The second matter I want to bring up is the discrimination against the prairie provinces under the freight rates as they exist today. For many years western Canada has been forced to pay freight rates from 15 to 18 per cent higher than rates for similar commodities in Ontario and Quebec. Railroad rates affect everyone in the west, whether they be farmers, workers, businessmen or anything else. They enter into the everyday life of the people. Produce is shipped east or west; merchandise comes from east and west, mainly from the east. Why should we have to pay more than our neighbours? For years we have argued that the prairie freight rates

should be lower than those in central Canada. We have a flat country, with very few rivers; we have practically no natural obstacles. Hauls are long on the prairies, and most of the produce is moved in carload lots.

I want it to be perfectly clear to hon. members that if the railways need additional revenue to meet increased expenditures caused by higher costs and wages, that is quite all right; but why make the west the scapegoat? If we must have increased freight rates let us all bear a share, and not have the prairies foot the entire bill. Let us find a proper basis for obtaining increased revenues, if they are needed, so the burden will not be borne unequally by the people of Canada, particularly by those in the west and the maritimes, in order that the workers may get the increased wages they deserve and the railways may have the additional revenue they require to operate efficiently.

The progress that has been made by the railroads during the last thirty years never seems to be taken into consideration. I am speaking of this from personal experience, because more than thirty years ago I worked as a machinist in the railroad shops. In those days an engine made one divisional point, going perhaps 120 or 130 miles, and was then serviced. Now a locomotive makes at least three divisional points before being serviced. In those days box cars were built to hold 60,000 pounds. Now they carry 80,000 pounds, some even 100,000 pounds. Freight trains rolled along in those days with fifty cars. Now when you look out on the prairies you see these large engines hauling 100 cars. All this development and improvement must have saved money for the railroad companies.

Let us look at the discrimination that exists on the prairies and see what rates we pay as compared with the central provinces. In the west where there is no water competition, and where truck competition has been kept under supervision by the provincial government boards in order to avoid any real competition with the railroads, the railroads have been able to charge the full amount authorized by the board of transport commissioners. I would mention an example put on the record by the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) some time ago when he talked about barbed wire. He showed that on barbed wire shipped from Montreal to Vancouver the freight cost 95 cents per 100 pounds.

Mr. Blackmore: Seventy-five cents.

Mr. Bryce: It is 95 now. For the same 100 pounds of barbed wire, if it were shipped only half the distance, shipped to Calgary, the freight would cost \$1.98 per 100 pounds.

Another example was put on the record by the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Thatcher)