

Equalization of Freight Rates

speaking also for the Social Credit party, it is essential that there be action. While I am in sympathy with the resolution I am not at all convinced that it provides the answers.

(Translation):

Mr. Rosaire Gendron (Riviere du Loup-Temiscouata): Mr. Speaker, since this is the first time I rise in this house, I would like first of all to offer my congratulations and ask you to convey my congratulations also to the Speaker and to the Deputy Speaker. I add to these congratulations my best wishes for a long term of office in the chair.

I feel that the atmosphere you created makes easier the task of freshmen like myself. It makes it easier to jump in the fray. This reminds me of two verses from Moliere.

Bien lui en pris de n'être pas de glace,
N'y eût bientôt plus qu'une marre d'eau à sa place.

This motion submitted by the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Simpson) recalls to a certain point the history of this country, of the railways and more particularly of my constituency. As a matter of fact, the history of our country is most certainly related to the establishment of railway transportation. It would have never been possible, in my opinion, without linking the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans with this ribbon of steel to ensure the commercial development of areas which would have otherwise been very slow to contribute to the progress of our country. I am thinking of all the western provinces which before the advent of the railways had a population slightly above that of Riviere du Loup and have now become the pride of the country, being the granary of almost the whole world and giving such a considerable impetus to our economy.

However, there is also a problem which has always caused conflicts, the problem of the economical operation of railways and also on the part of the government on implementation of a policy of national economic development. As a matter of fact if we have had any desire to follow economic lines of the time, a hundred years ago, there is no doubt that we would have built a north-south railway instead of an east-west railway. It was done differently, because a whole new country was to be created, new areas, districts, were to be opened up. It was thanks to that faith that builders have, and which can displace mountains, that we are living in this great and beloved country of ours.

On the basis of that principle, that is, on the one hand, the search for the economic evolution of this country and, on the other hand, the economic feasibility of the undertaking, there necessarily arises a permanent conflict which will not be easily solved. However, such was the spirit of our forefathers, who

[Mr. Thompson.]

wanted to build something great and to develop the marginal areas of this country. When searching for a solution, it is essential that a spiritual atmosphere be created, which would help the underdeveloped areas to evolve normally within the Canadian economy.

I said before that this also reminded me of the history of my constituency. Also, one hundred years ago, the Grand Trunk had a terminal at Riviere du Loup. And a few years later, Riviere du Loup was linked with New Brunswick by the Temiscouata railway, which is now a part of the C.N.R. system. And because of those transportation facilities, our county was enjoying a considerable expansion which was to provide for its development but which, unfortunately, also led to serious difficulties, especially at the time of the dieselization of the equipment and the closing down of our C.N.R. workshops.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that the advent of the railway almost had international effects, because in 1862, the *London News* said this:

Most of our readers never heard of Riviere du Loup, but if war broke out with the United States, because of present unfortunate disagreements between England and the United States, Riviere du Loup would become as well known to the English public as Balaclava was during the Crimean war, because that is the place and just about the only place where, during winter, we would be able to make contacts and send the troops and supplies necessary to the defence of that part of our great and priceless colony situated between the mouth of the St. Lawrence river and the shore of lake Huron.

Mr. Speaker, if railways can make way for a considerable development and give certain regions a marked geographic importance, it is essential to encourage the development of depressed areas through freight rates which provide for the normal development of their economy, of their industry and of their general trade.

I congratulate the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Simpson) for bringing this serious problem to the attention of the house and I agree with those who took the floor before me and who pointed out that this was an important but very complex problem. The principle set forth in the resolution could become an extremely important planning instrument for the government. However, it is not the only one, because I am convinced that if the emphasis is placed only on transport rates in order to ensure the development of underprivileged regions, the problem of unfair and discriminatory competition with regard to other means of transport arises then.

On the other hand, if the emphasis is placed only on profit and the financial sound-