

Supply—Transport

Mr. Blackmore: I will not proceed with the discussion, but I think hon. members will be a bit surprised to find that this discussion has been permitted for an hour and a half, and just as soon as a really adequate arrangement of the whole argument is presented the subject is *sub judice*. If there is any one thing that needs to be placed on *Hansard* so that the people of Canada and the members of the house can see the kind of thing that has been done by the board of transport commissioners, in support of whom we are passing an estimate, this is the very thing that everybody ought to know.

Mr. Chevrier: May I tell the hon. member that the provinces and boards of trade, and I presume the board of trade he is referring to now, had every opportunity and took advantage of it in presenting to the board of transport commissioners their arguments on the 21 per cent case, again on the 20 per cent case, and still further to the royal commission on transportation. What more could the hon. member wish by way of public hearings?

Mr. Blackmore: The trouble does not arise because of the fact that these arguments have not been presented effectively. The astounding thing to the house and to the country is that the board of transport commissioners has paid no attention whatsoever to the presentations that have been made, and have gone right ahead just as though they had not been made at all. Take the presentation of any of the seven provinces of this dominion which protested against the recent advance of 8 per cent. We shall find a case that is simply astonishing, yet no attention is paid to it at all. We had a similar presentation by each province against the increase of 1946, and again no attention was paid to it. The increase was allowed, and no adjustments were permitted to make up for the inequities which abound in the freight rate structure of this country.

I realize, Mr. Chairman, that as soon as the *sub judice* principle is applied I am out of order. I am just a little astonished, however, that it has been applied to stop me while it was not applied to stop others, but I thank you for having permitted me to go as far as you did. Hon. members will be glad to know that I could produce five times as much as I have placed on *Hansard* tonight, and that I would be quite prepared to produce it had I not been called to order.

Item agreed to.

453. Departmental administration, \$836,737.

Mr. Isnor: Under this item I desire to bring before the minister and the committee the question of the policy being pursued by the

government with respect to shipping. I am not sure that the government has a definite shipping policy, but I am going to ask the minister that question and perhaps later on he will be good enough to advise us as to what policy is being pursued in respect of Canadian shipping. I refer him to the situation we have at the present time on the Atlantic coast. I am sure he is familiar with a great many of the facts, but I doubt if a person can realize the effects of that situation unless he is actually at or near one of our Atlantic ports.

I recall the position in which we found ourselves with respect to shipping in the early days of the war, and I am further reminded of that by the report of the Canadian maritime commission, which in its first report had this to say:

In 1939 the Canadian fleet of regular ocean-going ships over 1,600 gross tons contained only 35 ships, totalling 242,000 gross tons. By 1947 this fleet had increased to 153 ships, totalling 983,000 gross tons, and a further 80 ships totalling about 560,000 gross tons were on charter to the United Kingdom ministry of transport.

That fleet placed us in fourth position among the shipping nations of the world. I recall that it was not unusual to see 50, 75 or 100 ships in Bedford basin, the inland body of water off Halifax harbour. Anyone who wished could go to Citadel Hill almost any morning and watch these ships sail out of the harbour in convoy at intervals of perhaps four minutes, with 15 ships sailing each hour. This would go on for three or four hours, until one could see 50, 75 or 100 ships moving out of that harbour. Today practically no ships are going out of Halifax harbour. The minister will say that war conditions were responsible for a great deal of the shipping that went through the port of Halifax. We recognize that, but we are concerned over what is being done to overcome the present scarcity of shipping through our ports; and when I say "our ports" I am not referring particularly to Halifax, because the same thing applies to Saint John and other Atlantic ports.

I recall that in 1942 I took strong exception to the personnel suggested for the maritime commission. It was not that I had any particular feeling with respect to the individuals mentioned, but I stressed the fact that on that commission we wanted a man from the Atlantic coast, a maritime man who understood our problems. The minister was rather put out with me because I spoke so strongly on the matter. He is smiling now, but he was rather cross because I kept insisting in that vein. Today I feel that I was justified in stressing that point, because now we find ourselves in the unfortunate position of not having a policy at all, as far as I know, or at