

*The Address—Mr. Mazankowski*

been incurred through no fault of the farmer. These costs have accumulated to the point that they represent millions and millions of dollars.

Then we come to the question of agricultural input. What has the Minister of Agriculture done in respect of maintaining the price of fertilizer and chemicals, which have doubled in price in the last year, or what has he done in respect of the price of steel which has increased 50 per cent in the last 12 months, or the price of twine which has increased four times?

What has the minister done about the availability of these products? It is bad enough that the price has increased, but many of these products are not available to the producer. Prices become secondary when availability is not there. Perhaps some form of a prices review board should monitor the effects of the pricing policies of these various corporations. Yes, Canada's number one industry, agriculture, is indeed in a mess. The egg situation is merely part of the over-all problem as a result of the philosophy of this government which still patterns its policies after the Task Force on Agriculture.

The government is still following the general policy of its marketing bill, Bill C-176, or programs such as Operation LIFT, supply management, and things of that nature. We now hear from the Minister of Finance that agriculture is to be expanded. Ever since the government has taken office it has been attempting to contract agricultural production. Its flip-flop policy has cost the farmers millions and millions of dollars. This is the type of leadership which leads agriculture down the drain, and leads individual farmers to financial ruin.

I now should like to turn to the matter of transportation. It is still a mess. It has not changed one iota since the last session. The government had an election platform which now has been abandoned. I find it appalling that some of the exotic and very aggressive proposals that were advanced during the election campaign have now casually been cast aside. These were proposals conceived in desperation, I suggest.

This situation has been known in this House for many years, but it has been more serious during the time we had the previous minority government. The fact is that we still have discriminatory freight rates. Nothing is being done about that. My party during the election campaign advanced a policy in this regard which we were prepared to adopt had we taken office.

We all know that the trackage and roadbeds in this country require upgrading. There is need for improvement in respect of the safety of our railroad lines. The other day the President of the CNR indicated that we require an expenditure of something in the order of \$5 billion to improve our trackage and roadbeds. Does the government intend to do anything about this? The government must provide some of these answers and take action. The President of the CNR in a speech in Montreal the other day said:

We are beginning to reach the capacity of our rail network and unless we begin immediately on large-scale programs of doubling our main lines in many parts of Canada and increasing the capacity of our yards we will not be able to maintain the level of service we are providing now. This is one of the biggest problems facing the future of transportation in Canada.

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

There are problems. We haven't had solutions. What we require is action. The Canadian Transport Commission and the National Transportation Act need restructuring. Appeal procedures must be changed. The thrust for economic development must be enshrined within the National Transportation Act. Let us see some action now from this government in this regard.

Then there is the question of branch line abandonment. Branch line abandonment is frozen until the end of 1974. What is the future policy of the government in this regard? This government, which has had a mandate since July 8, still has not made an enunciation of policy.

What is to happen in respect of the freeze on freight rates which is to expire by the end of December 1974? What is the situation for the future in respect of the Crowsnest Pass freight rates? Does the government intend to abandon the Crowsnest Pass freight rates? What is government policy in this regard? The producers of this country must have answers to these questions.

What is to be done about the Port of Vancouver? And what is to be done in respect of improved grain handling facilities to which I referred in the question period today? A commitment was made in the Speech from the Throne that steps would be taken to facilitate the movement of grain this winter. To date we have had no answer action in this regard.

Any time the government finds itself in difficulty it speaks of nationalization. Now it is speaking of the nationalization of the grain handling companies, the co-operatives, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the Manitoba Wheat Pool, the Alberta Wheat Pool and the United Grain Growers. These grain handling companies are owned by the farmers of Canada. Because there have been some difficulties in respect of labour-management relations members of the cabinet suggest that the grain handling companies should be nationalized. What is the policy of the government in this regard?

What is to happen in respect of the third air carrier policy? We heard much talk about this during the election campaign. As yet we have not had an enunciation of policy. What about air navigation in the north? We know that air navigation facilities in the north are far from adequate. We have lost too many lives and too much property has been destroyed for us to go along with this inaction of the government.

● (1540)

It is time that we got down to specifics. The government has a majority. It has a mandate from the Canadian people to carry out some of the lofty proposals which it made during the election campaign. Let it get on with the job.

There have been many studies carried out with regard to transportation, particularly in the last 18 months. I should like to remind hon. members that it was this government that allowed railway services to deteriorate. It was this government that failed to provide effective and adequate leadership in transportation policy which is so vital to the economic and social wellbeing of this country. It was this government that created the National Transportation Act which the minister now suggests is ineffective. It was this government which acquiesced in the downgrading and eventual removal of many railway passenger services.