

natural harbours of the world; they saw in it an escape route for the people of the central sections of this country, in the event of war; they pictured Atlantic liners operating almost like a ferry service from Liverpool to Halifax, and vice versa, as against the utterance of Joseph Howe, the Nova Scotian who said that entry into Confederation would result in grass growing in the street. Well, there is no doubt about the value of the Port of Halifax, and there never has been any doubt as to its importance in the national interest during times of war.

May I remind honourable senators that Halifax is the only city in Canada that has seen war at first hand, because upon the shores of that city, and upon the shores of the little peninsula of Nova Scotia, there were washed the first dead of World War I, and also of World War II. From that great national Port of Halifax in this New World there were sent out to the rescue of the Old World large convoys of men, munitions and foodstuffs. One day I flew out over a 92-ship convoy, and I wish I could describe to you the operations necessary, after the opening of the gates, by aircraft and torpedo destroyers, and the scope of motion required by these 92 ships, with the tankers in the middle and the ships three abreast. They were not expendable. If the gas or petrol had not gone to the other side disastrous consequences might have fallen upon us.

The Port of Halifax was vital in time of war. Is it to be virtually abandoned in time of peace? Well, for the past few weeks ships have been lying at anchor in the harbour of Halifax, unable to find piers or berthing facilities, because they are not available. Some may say this is only an occasional occurrence, but that is a type of retrogressive thinking that has operated for years against the economy of the Atlantic Region; it is the sort of thing that, on the part of officials of Government, can do more harm than many sessions of Parliament can repair. I say to you, honourable senators, that if the real potential of the Port of Halifax is to be realized facilities must be provided for the shipping of the world that wants to use the port.

Halifax, or Nova Scotia, does not own the Port of Halifax any more; the city and province lost its ownership some years ago when the National Harbours Board was set up. The port is entirely in the hands of an organization that is the result of a statute. I make no criticism of its membership, for it is composed of worthy members, who act according to their lights, but my criticism is that they do not see clearly or accurately or far enough ahead. I think that long ago they should have envisaged the potentiality of the Port

of Halifax and secured options in the north and in the south from one point to the other so that a giant sea wall with proper facilities could be built to extend from Pier 9 in the north end to Pier 20 in the south end. I urge that immediate attention be given to this, and I do not mean that in the sense in which it is usually applied. I do not mean that the matter should be taken under advisement or that it should be given careful consideration, because those terms are used nauseously. I ask them to appreciate the fact that simply because the harbour is in Nova Scotia it is not withdrawn from the Canadian economy, and further that the facilities the port so badly needs will have to be provided if the potential of this great harbour is to be realised.

Hon. Mr. Quinn: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Halifax North): I pass on to point number 2. I note, as no doubt all honourable members of this chamber have done, that the provisions of the Maritime Freight Rates Act have been under discussion for some time. The news in that connection is tempered, however, by the fact that, according to the newspapers—and I do not profess to know if they are correct—the intent is merely to arrange the present subsidies now existent so as to put more emphasis on transport of goods outside the province rather than between provinces. There is some merit in the scheme, but I suggest that by logical reasoning it does not go far enough. The Atlantic manufacturer who wants to sell in the central Canadian markets is at a great disadvantage because freight rates to these parts, where the centres of loading and population are, make it impossible for him to compete there. He requires not only a rearrangement of the present subsidies, but also—and I speak collectively now—a much greater additional subsidy to remove the existing differential.

I do not blame the railways for increasing freight rates. I sometimes question the wisdom of the Maritime Board of Trade in paying for expensive legal representation at hearings of applications by the railways for increased freight rates. The railways are in business for profit, and I see no reason why they should not get an equitable return for carrying freight to any part of the country. But, honourable senators, the Government of Canada is the agency which should not allow any section of the country to be victimized by freight rates. That is the position in which we in the Maritimes find ourselves today. We hear a good deal said about the unity of Canada with respect to race and religion. But there is another relationship, which perhaps is just as important, namely,