

Supply—Transport

Mr. Blackmore: And I have just finished making a statement that should have warned the hon. member not to make the statement he has just made. Apparently he could not hear what I said. I suggest he listen to what I say from now on.

It is pointed out that many commodities might be shipped from Montreal to Vancouver, and then back to Edmonton—all those hundreds of miles extra—and then shipped out a distance of forty miles to a town called Holden, and sold more cheaply than if they were shipped directly to Holden from Montreal. What does that mean? It means that Alberta distributors are being deprived of the privilege of distributing goods to the people of Alberta. But apparently the freight rates were designed for that very purpose. And if they were not designed for that purpose it will take plenty of explaining on the part of the men who drafted those freight rates to clear themselves.

We come now to the third point: the freight rate structure in Alberta impedes ordinary economic development within the province more than does the freight rates structure in any other province in Canada. I shall quote a general statement from the Edmonton submission in this connection and leave the burden of proof upon them. These are their words as they appear at page 28:

Moreover, certain goods moving to or from points in other provinces enjoy a commodity rate that is not available on movements of the same goods to or from Edmonton and other Alberta points, which latter movements carry class rates.

I am sure that statement could be supported with figures just as striking as the ones I used in connection with the other point I made. But we will not take time to give too many figures, because it would weary the house.

The fourth point is this: interprovincial trade between Alberta and British Columbia is hampered by inequitable freight rates in a way that in my judgment constitutes a scandal. If any province has any rights at all, economically, those rights ought to include the privilege of trading with the province next door in an unimpeded manner. But that is not so in respect of British Columbia and Alberta. Why? I am not going to go into that matter. It has been suggested, though, that long ago certain men in eastern Canada realized the tremendous productive potential of Alberta and British Columbia, and intended to see to it that never should those provinces reach the degree of industrial development of which they were capable, considering their resources; and the freight rates were simply one of the means whereby a guarantee was provided that such development would not take place. If that is so, and

[Mr. Murray (Cariboo).]

if that was behind the freight rates, then I submit an outrage was committed against Canada. There was a betrayal of trust on the part of the men who had anything to do with planning those rates. There is an equal betrayal of trust on the part of the men who suffered those inequities to endure. I propose to quote again from the submission by the Edmonton chamber of commerce. At page 28 I find this:

Again, basic freight rates on movements between Alberta and British Columbia are much higher than on interprovincial movements in any other part of Canada.

I am going to leave once more the Edmonton chamber of commerce to support its case, and I am sure it can do so. Then again from page 28 I quote:

Similarly, movements from Vancouver to Winnipeg and eastern Canada are subject to a higher relative reduction for class rates than are movements from Vancouver to Alberta.

I now come to what is perhaps the most pernicious aspect of all, and that is that in effect a tariff wall has been erected against Alberta, through freight rates. Certain freight rates protect certain Ontario producers against competition from Alberta processed goods in any western Canadian market, and in the Ontario market. For example, live cattle carry a freight rate from Edmonton to eastern Canada of \$1.14 per hundredweight. But fresh meat, the steer that has been killed and processed, thus giving Alberta people a little work to do, costs \$1.88 per hundred as compared with \$1.14, or 68 per cent more. Imagine any railroad charging, for a steer dead and dressed, something that requires no care or feeding or anything of that sort, 68 per cent more for shipment from Edmonton to Montreal than is charged to ship the same steer alive! Just contemplate that calmly and consider what it has done to the development of secondary industry in Alberta. Obviously the object has been to keep Alberta a primary producer or a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for the other areas of Canada, and permit those other areas to draw off the cream from the production of Alberta. The same inequity in freight rates exists in respect to live cattle and dressed beef shipped from Alberta to Vancouver. Whichever way the beef is going they have arranged matters so that Alberta loses much of the advantage of the livestock she produces.

No wonder the leader of the opposition had such scathing things to say about the board of transport commissioners; I am not sure that I should not say a few myself. Here are some more astonishing things. Certain freight rates expose the Alberta manufacturer to competition from Ontario goods in the Alberta market. In other words, certain