

Mr. THOMAS REID (New Westminster): Although I had something to say on the subject of freight rates after the Easter recess, in view of the fact that two want of confidence motions have since been brought before the house, and having regard to the speeches that have been made, I feel it incumbent upon me this afternoon to say something further.

I was a little amused at the remark of the hon. member for Swift Current (Mr. Bentley) when he talked about the common law marriage between Liberals and Conservatives.

Mr. BENTLEY: It is legal out in British Columbia, I admit.

Mr. REID: If it is a common law marriage, the offspring must be the members of that party to which the hon. gentleman belongs.

Mr. KNOWLES: What has the hon. member been doing?

Mr. REID: That is only by the way.

An hon. MEMBER: Oh, oh!

Mr. REID: If the hon. member keeps interrupting I will wait until he stops. I did not interrupt him.

Mr. BENTLEY: Have fun.

Mr. REID: If one cannot be a gentleman, he should at least act like one.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. REID: First of all, I want to make a comment on the want of confidence motion introduced by the leader of the C.C.F. It is like a great many more of the theories propounded by that group. One has only to read the motion to realize that what I am about to say is correct. He says it may be a want of confidence motion, that it may defeat the government, and that if it does, the people of Canada should decide. Will any member of parliament tell me if there is any one particular subject which the people of Canada can decide? One can just imagine a general election on the freight rates issue.

Mr. PROBE: It would be just too bad for you if you had it.

Mr. REID: It is an issue which would principally affect the people of British Columbia, who would speak about it, and perhaps the people of the prairies. But when you came to the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, which have over sixty per cent of the population of Canada, I greatly doubt if freight rates would be an issue at all. How then could the people of Canada settle it? I cannot see the people in Ontario and Quebec voting for the develop-

ment of British Columbia and the prairies if it meant the moving of the industries from those provinces out to the west. Therefore, in my opinion, what is suggested by the leader of the C.C.F. would not work at all. It is just a lot of theory. It would never work out in practice, because every member of parliament knows that no one can tell exactly what one issue elects or defeats a member. There are so many issues involved in an election that no person can say that this, that or the next thing either elected or defeated him. So I say there is nothing to the contention that the people of Canada would decide the issue. I submit that they would do no such thing.

I am frank to admit that the general freight rates issue—that is, the charges for freight between various provinces and for various distances—is a matter which is somewhat complicated for the House of Commons to decide. Any reasonable-minded member will readily admit that. But I well remember what happened when I brought the plain issue of grain rates before the house. For five years, standing over there in the opposition, I tried to get some redress with regard to grain rates—which was just one issue—from the prairie provinces to British Columbia. I well remember the treatment I received. I was told plainly on every occasion: "Why do you bring this subject into the house?" I was told that by the Conservative government then in office. I was told to take it to the board of transport commissioners. They said, "Do not bring it up here." I was not arguing the general freight rates structure at all. I was arguing one issue and one issue only namely grain rates. I well remember how the vote went when I was voted down. Even the members from British Columbia on the Conservative side actually stood up in their places and voted against me in the year 1935, the vote on that occasion being 45 to 64.

May I also point out this to hon. members. All the decreases which have taken place since 1920 have taken place under a Liberal administration. The one increase, the great 40 per cent increase, took place under a Conservative administration in 1920. I doubt if many members in the central provinces, including even the minister who mentions the mountain differential, is cognizant of the fact that there is no such thing as a mountain differential so far as the Canadian National Railways are concerned. The mountain differential was instituted after the building of the Canadian Pacific into British Columbia.

If one looks into the history of it, he will find that actually a Conservative administration was defeated in the year the railway