

Rate Structure on Freight on Maritimes

Mr. O'Keefe: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Macquarrie: Prince Edward Island has problems, but I do say—

Mr. O'Keefe: On a point of order—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): Order. The hon. member is rising on a point of order.

● (9:30 p.m.)

Mr. O'Keefe: I addressed the house earlier on this very problem which is of intense concern to all members of the house and of particular concern to those representing the maritimes.

Mr. Macquarrie: I was basing my remarks on the fact that a careful reading of the St. John's newspapers shows they were decrying the failure of many members representing Newfoundland to respond to certain indignant representations from labour unions. It is not my purpose to enter into a crossfire with members from another province or party. I am only interested in the enhancement of the transportation facilities in Newfoundland. As a member of another island province which has suffered much at the hand of the dominion government, the hon. member might appreciate our help rather than seek to divert me from my cause.

On behalf of the hon. member's province, I wish to say that the forcible unemployment of hundreds of people in Newfoundland is of great concern. I ask the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) to bend a sensitive ear to the problems of those people. I have seen little indication of sensitivity, but I live in hope. I do not thrive on adversity and I would be more interested were the minister to take an active part toward making the transportation legislation more sensitive to the needs of our area and especially to the needs of the island provinces which will need, after many years of inequality, some measure of redress. Let us have that rather than the bureaucratic, soulless interpretation which will leave us farther behind the rest of the country than we now are. I urge the minister to take an early look at some of those problems which my colleagues, and especially my colleague from Kings (Mr. McQuaid), so eloquently elucidated tonight. This is a grievance, as transportation so often has been a grievance in this country. We are suffering today because the central government lacks sensitivity. I invite the government to remedy their political situation by taking concrete steps,

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

economically and legislatively, not so much on our behalf as on behalf of our area and the country as a whole.

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Royal): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Queens said, it is not the intention of those of us representing maritime constituencies to make this grievance a partisan matter.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fairweather: I hesitated before seeking the floor. I hoped that a maritime member who supports the government would share our concern for this most serious matter.

An hon. Member: Why are you laughing?

Mr. Fairweather: Because I have a happy attitude toward problems and I feel that to smile is better than to smirk or sneer.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fairweather: I had not expected, when rising in this debate, to share my personal philosophy with the house; but if challenged I shall be ready for that, too.

Let us return to the issue, the change in the transportation economics of the maritimes. As the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton (Mr. Flemming) has said, the l.c.l. rates have been abandoned and express rates imposed on less than carload shipments. I think that the new minister, who does not yet represent a constituency in the maritimes, will be glad for this crash course in maritime transportation economics. He will not learn much from this speech; still, he will get the idea that we who oppose the government are united in this serious grievance.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fairweather: I will leave to others the difficulty of pointing out to the minister the benefits of this joint briefing. It is obvious that there are many disabilities in the area. Perhaps we should not advertise them; but if we are to speak factually it is well to admit that many obstacles face the industrialization of eastern Canada, not the least of which is the obstacle of transportation.

I will not repeat what has been said about specific instances, but I will say that lately in the Atlantic provinces, through the help of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council and the Atlantic Development Board, we have been enabled to take a united stand on some of the disabilities that plague us.