

Supply—Transport

respect to the report of the royal commission on transportation. It is a subject of wide concern, and I do not feel capable of discussing it as it should be discussed.

The minister has said that these estimates were called for the purpose of permitting a general discussion on this subject, as well as other transportation matters. That is hardly fair to hon. members. I, for one, did not know the estimates of this department were being called.

Mr. Chevrier: I said that was one of the reasons.

Mr. Black (Cumberland): I do not think the minister knew they were being called, either.

Mr. Chevrier: Yes, I did.

Mr. Black (Cumberland): I understood some other departments were to be called. I am sure there are some members who would have liked to be here to discuss this subject, had they known that this was the occasion upon which these matters were to be discussed. I know there are some who should be here, whether they want to be here or not, in order that they might speak for their constituencies.

The matter of transportation is very important to all the provinces, but to no provinces is it more important than to the maritimes. We would never have entered confederation had it not been for the fact that transportation was being dealt with. Nova Scotia and the other maritime provinces, as well as the western provinces, have made representations before this royal commission. They have spent weeks—yes, months—in the study, and have engaged the services of experts.

Speaking for myself, until I have had the opportunity of learning the views of those who represented Nova Scotia at the hearings, I would not be in a position to state to the committee the viewpoint of that province in relation to the commission's findings. I know there is discontent in Nova Scotia and in the other maritime provinces in the matter of transportation as it affects those provinces. I know that steps should be taken to make it easier for the producers in the maritimes to market their products. I do not feel that I, as one of the representatives from the maritimes, am in a position tonight to deal adequately with the subject.

I do not fail to pay great respect to the commissioners as capable men who have given the matter of transportation thorough study. I am not saying their findings are correct, but I realize that we must pay them great respect. They are outstanding men,

and I believe their service to Canada will be valued for many years to come.

They have dealt with some special matters, one of which is the maritime freight rates as proposed by the Duncan commission in 1927. Their recommendation is that it be accepted as a permanent feature in the freight rates structure of Canada. I believe that is considered essential by the people of the maritime provinces, but it is not enough to meet the requirements

They have made reference to the Chignecto canal. The commission in its report has turned thumbs down on that project. Whether they were qualified to do so, I have my doubts. I do not believe for instance they considered the matter from the standpoint of defence. In my view the building of the Chignecto canal is of great importance from the standpoint of the proper defence of North America, and I do not believe that phase was studied.

They referred to the Chignecto canal as a commercial undertaking that should pay its way. Certainly that is the effect of their finding and no other canal has been so treated. This project has been promised to that part of Canada since the days of confederation. Even if it will cost more than some people think it should, it should not be put on a paying commercial basis. The people of the maritime provinces feel that it should be built as a commitment on the part of Canada. No adverse report by this commission with respect to the building of this canal should be accepted as final.

Before I would be in a position to discuss their recommendation I should like to hear from the committee from the maritime provinces that gave months to a study of this project. They sent up the largest delegation that had ever come to Ottawa from the maritime provinces to urge the construction of this canal. The personnel of this committee gave much time and expended large sums to arrive at their conclusions and they will be dissatisfied with the adverse report by this commission, no matter how able it may be. From representations that have been made to me I know that there is great dissatisfaction with this report on the part of many people in the maritime provinces. I am not in position to discuss the report in detail and I do not think it was expected that it should be discussed at this time.

I should like to refer to the remarks of the hon. member for Cape Breton South with respect to the Canso bridge and say that I agree with much that he has said. There is great dissatisfaction in Nova Scotia that more headway has not been made in the