

*Supply—Transport*

**Mr. Chevrier:** My hon. friend knows he can put in any section he wants at any time.

**Mr. Blackmore:** There are several things I should like to tell the minister about the board of transport commissioners.

**Mr. Cruickshank:** He has a lot to learn about this.

**Mr. Blackmore:** I want to do so in order that he will be on guard when he comes to consider the new adjustment in respect of freight rates. I think hon. members of the house would be astounded to learn some of the things that have been done under the guise of a freight rate structure in some of the provinces of Canada. I shall give a few items affecting my own province. Other hon. members will probably be able to present a similar array as to their own provinces. The examples which I am using are all used in a submission made by the Edmonton chamber of commerce in the year 1938 to the Rowell-Sirois commission. I say that so that hon. members will know that everything I am giving them is authentic, and was prepared by experts employed by the Edmonton chamber of commerce. I think there will be no question that these freight rates existed in 1938. If there have been substantial changes since that time the minister will be able to point them out. Let us bear in mind that since that time there have been two distinct advances in freight rates allowed all across the board with no allowance whatsoever being made for irregularities or inequalities suffered by any area or any province.

In the first place the ordinary consumers of Alberta are penalized for living in Alberta. To move flannelette blankets from eastern Canada to Vancouver costs \$1.75 per hundredweight, but when they go to Edmonton the freight rate is \$4.53½. Kalsomine costs \$1 per hundredweight to move it to Vancouver from Montreal or eastern Canada and \$1.33½ to move it to Edmonton, 500 miles nearer the point of origin. Lard and cooking oils cost \$1 to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton. Paints and varnishes are \$1.25 to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton. Shoes are \$2 to Vancouver and \$3.03 to Edmonton. Soaps are \$1 to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton. Wrought iron pipe is 70 cents to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton. The above figures are all per hundredweight.

If it were only an isolated case of that sort one would imagine that it had just happened, but a list of such irregularities as the one I have in my hands makes it appear as though the whole thing was by design. The reduction for class rates is on a higher percentage in eastern Canada than on movements from eastern Canada to Alberta. That

is the definite statement made by the Edmonton chamber of commerce at page 28 of their submission.

The primary producers of Alberta are handicapped by freight rates. To move barbed wire, of which we use a good deal, from Montreal to Vancouver costs 75 cents a hundredweight, but to Edmonton it costs \$1.98 a hundredweight. Wire fencing costs \$1.25 to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton. Building paper and roofing costs \$1.25 to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton. Iron and steel bars cost 65 cents to Vancouver and \$1.79 to Edmonton. Nails cost \$1.50 to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton. Structural steel, bolts and nuts cost \$1 to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton. Many other hardware items are treated similarly. Twine costs \$1.30 to Vancouver and \$2.33½ to Edmonton. Window glass costs \$1 to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton.

Alberta uses a great many agricultural implements, and British Columbia considerably fewer, but in one classification it costs \$1.25 to move them to Vancouver, and \$1.79 to Edmonton. According to another classification it is \$1.50 to Vancouver and \$1.98 to Edmonton. Galvanized or plain steel sheets cost 60 cents to Vancouver and \$1.44 to Edmonton.

I submit to you, Mr. Chairman, and to hon. members of the committee, that that array of inequities constitutes an absolutely scandalous reflection on the board of transport commissioners. I doubt that they can be defended on any grounds of equity or logic.

**Mr. Chevrier:** If I may interrupt the hon. member on a point of order, I presume he has quite a lengthy speech on this matter, and I do not want to interrupt him unduly, but I think that first of all it should be brought to the attention of the chair that at the moment there is before the board of transport commissioners an application for a 20 per cent increase, an interim judgment having been handed down, and an appeal therefrom to the Supreme Court of Canada. Since the matter is *pendente lite* I submit that it should not be discussed at this time. The hon. member is discussing the very matters that came up in that case. If the Chairman feels that he should be allowed to proceed I will listen, but I think we are proceeding right in the teeth of the rules.

**The Deputy Chairman:** I think the point raised by the minister is well taken. Now that the reasons have been stated by the minister I presume the hon. member who has the floor will refrain from discussing that particular point.