

*Freight Rates*

(Mr. Isnor), representing the other end of the country, had this to say, as reported on page 2639 of *Hansard*:

I hope that the motion which was introduced today by the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) and the remarks of the various hon. members, who have presented their views from various angles, will have some effect on the board of transport commissioners. If not, I hope and I believe that it will have some effect on the government in making them realize that this action is not one which is well received in other than the two central provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

It would seem that the senior member for Halifax has changed his mind between April 5 and April 13. I turn over a few pages and I find that the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank) had something fine to say about the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell), as reported at page 2652 of *Hansard*:

I wish to compliment the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) on his speech this afternoon. I believe that he spoke on behalf of all of us, and in my opinion in all the years I have been in this house I never heard him make a better speech. I am glad to say that he kept partisan politics entirely out of it. I am sure that he spoke for every member from the maritimes and certainly for every member from British Columbia, irrespective of party.

If that was the situation as regards freight rates on April 5, and nothing has happened in the meantime to change the effect of the order of the transport commission on freight rates in British Columbia or the maritime provinces, what is it that has caused this great change of mind? The cause of this great change has been what the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Gibson) has been trying to put over on this group.

Mr. CHEVRIER: You did not like his speech, did you?

Mr. MacINNIS: I liked it all right, if you could call it a speech, but that is a matter of opinion. He said that C.C.F. members were afraid they might have to go back to the use of the pick. I would tell him that the members in this group are taking exactly the same stand as they took on April 5, and the members who are afraid to go back to the use of the pick are the members opposite who have changed their tune in the meantime.

The hon. member for Comox-Alberni mentioned, quite fairly, I think, that the lumber and fish produced on the Pacific coast is now sold at a much higher price than previously and it should reasonably carry its fair share of increased freight rates. I want to draw attention to another important commodity which we produce in British Columbia and which is not in the favourable position of lumber or

[Mr. MacInnis.]

fish; because of market conditions it cannot absorb increased freight rates. I refer to fruit. Grain shipments are exempted from the freight rate increases, and if these increases are to be continued in effect, I think something similar should be done for the fruit industry which, even before this freight rate increase, was facing a serious situation, and the new freight rate increase may mean the difference between carrying on or going out of business for the fruit growers. I have before me a copy of a telegram sent to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier), dated April 10, 1948, signed by J. R. J. Stirling, president of the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association. I want to put this telegram on the record, and I hope that the petition in it will be supported by all the members from British Columbia to whom the fruit industry is of such immense importance. The telegram reads:

Confronted with problem of marketing estimated tree fruit crops largest in the area's history, with rising production costs and curtailed offshore exports, fruit growers of British Columbia are deeply concerned detrimental effect 21 per cent freight increase and non-removal long-standing discriminatory differentials. In light of prospective marketing outlook freight increase will take from this industry an additional million dollars in distributive transportation costs. Therefore this association urgently requests suspension new rates pending completion government's announced investigation.

Here you have an important industry which, even before this freight rate increase, was faced with a most difficult situation, and which, if something is not done to alter the new rates, will have to decide whether to carry on or go out of business altogether.

The railways in Canada are essential to the very life of this country, more so than any other form of transportation, and in order that the railways may operate efficiently I am not only agreed but firmly convinced that they must have adequate revenues. But I am also convinced that that revenue should be raised without discrimination between one section of the country and another. The Minister of Transport, speaking in the house a week ago, referred to the personnel of the transport department and said they were experienced and experts. I agree with that; but in view of the fact that it is accepted by everyone that there is discrimination and that the discrimination has existed for many, many years, I would say that the experts in the transport department are experts in discrimination.

Mr. CHEVRIER: That is a very unfair statement for an hon. member to make who pretends to be so fair in his statements in this house.