

conspiracy, in effect, to undermine and, hopefully, abandon the Crowsnest pass freight rates.

I believe we have sufficient evidence of that, Mr. Speaker, because while we hear the cry for more rolling-stock and the need for more boxcars to move grain, we note that there are cars sitting around the country. On sidings at Perdue, Saskatchewan, for example, some 20 boxcars had been loaded with wheat since December. Cars located at Provost, Alberta, had not turned a wheel for four weeks. Three hundred hopper cars sat in Vancouver during September and October and their alfalfa pellets were not unloaded until November 13. Also, 25 government hopper cars were waiting at Kindersley for seven days for spotting orders; 26 hoppers were sitting at Glenavon, Candiac, Montmartre, Odessa and Vibank for over two weeks before the Christmas holidays; three-quarters of a mile of boxcars were sitting idly at Claresholm for a month, and there was a similar situation at Cayley and Aldersyde; there were 40 cars northeast of Cranbrook which had not moved for a month. Why, Mr. Speaker?

I am not sure that more rolling-stock will solve the problem. I say this is a deliberate attempt by the railways to squeeze the government and the producers, who need to move grain now, into abandoning the Crowsnest pass freight rates; and they are convincing a few people. I remind them and all hon. members that the removal of the Crowsnest pass freight rates will not automatically solve the grain transportation problem. Shippers of other commodities such as fruit, lumber and even the floral people, are complaining that they cannot move their goods adequately by rail, and these items do not come under the Crowsnest pass freight rates. The government has an obligation, and the railways have an obligation to see that the grain is moved. I warn the government and reiterate to the minister that if the government thinks it can open up the hornets' nest of revising the Crowsnest pass freight rates, it will create a situation which will drive every western Liberal into oblivion.

Yesterday we awaited the statement of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) with great anticipation. He had advised the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) in the morning that he would be making a profound statement on transportation policy. The statement was that this government really does not have a policy, has not had one since 1967, and even that one was not good. He admitted that and said they will look at devising a new policy. That was the profound statement that he indicated he was going to make. I reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that the Crowsnest pass freight rates are a Magna Carta to western Canada's farmers. If they are tampered with, we on this side of the House will fight the issue right into the ground.

I want to deal for a moment with the cattle industry, which is in a very serious state. The climate in the cattle industry at the present time, particularly the feeding industry, can only be described as frightening. The flood of U.S. cattle into Canada, resulting in depression of prices coupled with high and increasing input costs, threatens the life of a major Canadian industry. It is a very major industry because the spin-off and the ancillary effects of the cattle feeding industry allow many allied industries to flourish in western Canada. Last year, for example, 128,000

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feeder cattle were shipped to the United States for feeding purposes; over 208,000 slaughter cattle were shipped back to Canada. This means, basically, that the Canadian cattle feeding industry has found itself uncompetitive with the United States. Canadians, therefore, are relying on U.S. feedlots to produce much of Canada's beef, resulting in a staggering loss of economic activity in this country. This year, to the end of February, in the order of 25,000 head of slaughter cattle crossed the U.S. border into Canada. It took eight months to reach that figure last year. This gives one some idea of the flood of imported cattle in comparison to what normally occurs.

What are the implications of this situation, Mr. Speaker? To put it simply, it will result in a shortage of beef down the line, and in much higher prices. The following appeared in the Alberta Farm Economist for the winter quarter, 1974:

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In the short run, producers may lose money at times when consumer demand weakens, yet the production level will continue with little variation. However, in the long run, the law of supply and demand will automatically choke off supply if the rapidly rising livestock production costs are not covered by market returns. Livestock and meat prices should be allowed to rise, following the market indicators, and thereby guarantee an adequate meat supply at equitable prices in the future. If livestock and meat prices do not move upward and the major inputs for livestock production continue to yield very lucrative returns to producers, consumers will eventually face a lower meat supply at very high prices.

That paragraph is to be found at page 2 of the publication. In a nutshell it tells us what we can expect if we do not solve this crisis. Last August, when beef prices skyrocketed, the government moved quickly. I urge the government to move as quickly in the present circumstances in order to save this important industry. Today, feeders large and small are losing between \$100 and \$150 per head. They cannot survive in this economic climate. The government must act with great haste at this time, just as it acted last year, to protect the consumer.

**Mr. Jim Fleming (York West):** Mr. Speaker, I begin my remarks by extending best wishes to His Excellency the Governor General and to Madame Léger in their new responsibilities. I think it does honour to Canada to have men and women of such calibre representing us. Truly, they are a great example of the excellence which Canada can develop. Being able to say that there are Canadians of that style, calibre and nature to represent us does great credit to this country. I also wish to extend best wishes to the Hon. Roland Michener and Mrs. Michener. I hope they will find happiness and that their time will be more restfully spent.

Following tradition, I extend congratulations to the mover and the seconder of the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. I do so with special pride for I believe that my colleague from metropolitan Toronto, the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Stollery), has brought a refreshing approach to this traditional honour paid to him. He has a special insight because of his experiences as a world traveller. I think that because of his perspective, which comes from knowledge of poverty and hardship and of the political systems of people in other countries, he is better able to judge how good or how bad things really are in Canada. I also congratulate the seconder, the hon.