

I interject parenthetically that this is not long ago, about a month and four days.

It was not until August 21, however, that sufficient details were available to the Maritimes Transportation Commission to commence an assessment of its effect on Atlantic provinces shippers.

Now, sir, we are getting into an area of two weeks and one day.

Concurrently with the coming into effect of the new tariff, all non-carload express rates were cancelled, with the exception of certain less than carload rates on Atlantic provinces fresh fish and seafood. Less carload freight rates issued to meet motor truck competition were also cancelled September 5. The published charges for cartage services were likewise cancelled on September 5.

We are right down to the eleventh hour, sir, with these various tariffs.

After September 5, the railways will no longer provide cartage service for non-carload traffic except when such traffic is assessed the new non-carload rates. Other less than carload class and commodity freight rates on Atlantic provinces' traffic have not yet been cancelled and shippers may utilize these rates provided the consignee and shipper perform the pick-up and delivery service.

That is the situation in an economic nutshell as seen by people familiar with transportation. But I can put it in an even smaller and neater nutshell than that. We, in Atlantic Canada, have been had by the transportation policies of the government. I say that again, sir. We have been had by the transportation policies of the government.

Again, I go back to my first thesis. If the government had presented a national transportation policy with all its ramifications, pro and con so far as my area is concerned, and pro and con so far as any area is concerned—we all have to live with the credits and the debits of confederation—showing the effects on our own areas, we would have been in a proper position to assess the benefits and the disabilities to Atlantic Canada, as well as the benefits and the disabilities to central and western Canada.

However, we were promised something. We were promised, "Your problems will be dealt with separately, and in a very fine way." That was a promise which we accepted in the House of Commons last year, and unless the government can remedy the situation now the only redress to achieve what we thought that promise meant is to go to the people and change the government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Queens): Mr. Speaker, in my ten years in the house I have
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not taken part in what is known as the grievance period, but tonight I am moved to say a few words. I would like to say that the brevity of my remarks is in no way correlated with the depth of my concern for the subject which the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Coates) has so very efficiently, effectively and eloquently opened.

I agree with what my colleagues from the Atlantic provinces have said about the problems, resulting from developments following the passage of new legislation in the field of transportation. As the hon. member for Cumberland has said, transportation issues are to us as old as confederation. Obviously, because of our geographical location, transportation and communication have been in the very forefront of our economic and political problems and of the economic and political queries which we have directed to the central government.

As my colleagues have indicated, at the present time there is a feeling of disappointment, to use a euphemism, resulting from new methods, new changes, which have exacerbated and aggravated existing problems and inequities, some might say iniquities, that have existed and do exist as the result of our geographical location. I would like to submit, sir, that for two areas in our region, the two island provinces, the difficulties are especially acute.

In Prince Edward Island, along with the less than beneficent results of the new legislation, we have been subjected to an increase in the rates on transportation, including ferry transportation. We have been subjected to a further delay in the causeway. Needless to say, neither factor has done anything for our economy, or for the hopes and aspirations of our people who, as long ago as 1873, were given precise, definite commitments in the realm of transportation.

On the other island, Newfoundland, the people are faced with something disturbing to them sociologically, and very upsetting in terms of economics, the withdrawal of passenger service on the railway. None of these things were mentioned in the terms of union some few years ago. I am disturbed about the surprising calm in reference to this very important measure, a startling economic deprivation and a major transportation dislocation in the newest province of the dominion. If no one is going to speak for that new province, I would venture to say a word on its behalf tonight. This is not to suggest, God knows, that Prince Edward Island has no problems—