

The Address—Mr. McCleave

Mr. R. J. McCleave (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, my first words in taking part in this debate must be of congratulation to yourself and through you to the other officers who will preside over the affairs of the house. It is a great personal satisfaction that your fairness, courtesy and humour have been recognized by most of the members.

I should also like to congratulate the mover (Mr. Lafreniere) and the seconder (Mr. Nielsen) of the address in reply to the speech from the throne for their approaches which are modern and youthful, the hon. member for Quebec-Montmorency for his attack on hidebound prejudice and the hon. member for the Yukon for his strong stand against the pessimistic spirit which could be called "iglooism". I noticed that the other member for the far north came here yesterday clad as if "iglooism" were the order of the day. There may in fact be a cold chill in his section of the house but we Conservatives face the future with optimism. To the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) I recall words spoken in the election campaign in Halifax when I said about our province: "You have kept faith with us. We will keep faith with you on March 31."

My province was not unique in its appreciation of the devoted intelligence and energy, the courage and vision that the right hon. gentleman has brought to Canadian life. To the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) I offer the comfort that can be obtained by a study of one of the great characters created by Anthony Trollope, his favourite author. He will know whom I mean when I say that the gentleman in the Barset series made out as best he could in charge of an institution which unfortunately was quite hopelessly out of date.

It is my honour to be the first speaker from Atlantic Canada. Once I would be known as a maritimer but Newfoundland has come into confederation and we try to include that province in the naming of our area. Atlantic provinces as a phrase has become rather cumbersome to the newspaper editors in our area and they have asked for some shorter form. Five years ago, if I had been asked, the ancient name Atlantis would have come to mind from mythology, being reasonably close to the word "Atlantic" and also conveying the suggestion of a body of land submerged under the water of Liberal indifference. Now, however, an active government is in control, we no longer feel submerged, and another name is necessary for the four provinces by the sea. For my newspaper editor friends I suggest the name "Atlantica". It fits nicely into one-column heads. But if they do not like "Atlantica",

[Mr. Speaker.]

then may I suggest that we revert to the old name of "Maritimes" with the thought that it includes Newfoundland.

Atlantica or the maritimes welcomed the decision of the cabinet to hold off the latest freight rate increase. We and the west have at last found a champion, we feel, who will rectify the iniquities of many years. It is, I think, basic that where the railways encounter intense competition from other carriers such as trucks or steamships the railways realize that the raising of rates to the levels authorized by the board of transport commissioners would lead to loss of traffic. It has therefore been the practice to apply only part or perhaps no part at all of increases in the central region of Canada. However, in areas where this competition is weak or non-existent, the traffic is captive and it gets the full load.

Let me illustrate. Take an example of a class 100 or first class commodity such as drygoods moving in less than carload quantities of 10,000 pounds from Montreal to Toronto, a distance of 335 miles depending on which way you are going—it is probably 335 miles moving from Toronto to Montreal and it may seem longer going back—and from Moncton to Sydney, a distance of 348 miles. On both movements, for the sake of this example, the rates are door-to-door rates because the railways will pick up and deliver. On January 1, 1948, before the first of the post-war series of freight rate increases became effective, the Montreal to Toronto rate was 60 cents per 100 pounds. On January 1, 1958—and this does not include the suspended increase—that rate had become 76 cents per 100 pounds, an increase of 26.7 per cent. On the other hand, the Moncton to Sydney rate, which on January 1, 1948 was 70 cents per 100 pounds, had become \$1.54 by January 1 of this year, an increase of 120 per cent. Why is there this discrepancy in the relative percentage increase? Competition and the lack of it provide the only answer to an increase of 26.7 per cent in the one case and 120 per cent in the other.

Let me take another example of carload traffic rated class 70 or third class moving in quantities of 20,000 pounds from Oshawa to Montreal, a distance of 301 miles and from Halifax to Sydney, a distance of 294 miles. On January 1, 1948, the Oshawa to Montreal rate was 63 cents per 100 pounds; on January 1 of this year it had risen to 75 cents, an increase of 12 cents or 19 per cent. On the other hand, the Halifax to Sydney rate, which on January 1, 1948, was 48 cents