

Supply—Resources and Development

not been able to develop them until recently. Now, there are several reasons why that is so, and one of the largest considerations entering into the development of our resources today is the cost of doing business.

In this connection I desire to register an emphatic protest against the freight rate structure in Canada, particularly as it applies to western Canada. The freight rate structure is particularly important, because of the prevalence of the non-discrimination-in-trade philosophy in government thinking, which is leading the government to think that every industry ought to stand on its own feet. I do not know whether the Minister of Finance was correctly reported, or whether I remember exactly what I read, but it seems to me he used one of those breezy, dramatic expressions of his not long ago, that our industry in Canada has got to brace itself for competition abroad. Whether he said that or whether he meant it, I do not know but I fancy he meant it. The point is that, not very long after he made that remark, his government was party to permitting a thing to happen in Canada that increased the difficulty of every industry in Canada in bracing itself against competition from abroad. Now if you put enough difficulties or enough burdens on a man's back, he cannot brace himself against anything. He falls of his own weight.

In this connection, the freight rate structure is exceedingly important in this country. It increases production costs at the very time when we should keep production costs down. Then there is an excessively high cost of living today. It is a burden that is pushing the people of Canada right to the ground. I believe from coast to coast the Canadian people are literally groaning in misery. Not very long ago there was an increase in the price of coal in Ottawa, and the people just groaned. What was partly responsible for that increase? Things like the increase in freight rates—

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but may I point out—

Mr. Blackmore: If the chairman would speak a little louder, I could hear him.

The Deputy Chairman: I said I was sorry to interrupt the hon. member, and I am sorry if I did not speak loudly enough for him to hear me. The item I have before me is item 600, "resources and development, departmental administration, further amount required, \$2,500." I fail to see how the hon. member can discuss freight rates under this item, but perhaps that is not what he was talking about. Perhaps I did not hear him too well up here.

Mr. Blackmore: I thought I made it quite clear to the chairman when I began, that I was laying emphasis on the second part of the title, which is development of resources.

Mr. Abbott: I wonder if I could appeal to my hon. friend? This item actually covers an additional amount for printing and stationery of \$1,000, and an additional item of \$1,500 for travelling expenses. Tomorrow is private members' day and Thursday, for reasons with which the hon. member is familiar, I am unable to be in the house. As I indicated earlier, it is urgent that these estimates should, if possible, be passed tonight. I would appeal to him, if it were possible, to defer his remarks on the general subject of resources and development until a little later in the week, or perhaps some time next week.

Mr. Blackmore: I believe every member in the house, and the minister himself, will agree that the development of the resources of Canada is going to depend a great deal on the sort of freight rates that prevail in Canada. I fancy, therefore, I am quite in order in that respect. I realize the difficulties under which the minister is labouring, and I deeply sympathize with him; every member in the house does. We sympathize with him, not only because of the difficulties he is in with respect to having these estimates passed, but because of certain other difficulties. At the same time, I feel the discussion of freight rates has been deferred too long. I think it is time that the members who represent the provinces that are being victimized spoke out, every one of them.

Mr. Pouliot: Hear, hear.

Mr. Blackmore: I am glad to see that one hon. member is catching the spirit. It is not my desire, Mr. Chairman, to hold up the house unduly. I believe I have nearly said enough to express my point of view, but I should like to add a few words in a general way before I sit down.

I should like to excuse myself on another score. This amount of money we are discussing falls under item 600, which is departmental administration. From time immemorial it has been customary in British houses of commons for the widest latitude to be allowed in discussing the item of departmental administration. I do not have to have much latitude to get a freight rate discussion out of the development of our natural resources.

Before the chairman felt compelled to interrupt in that genial way of his which we all admire so much, I was going to point out that Canada needs a tremendous amount of population today. We are never going to get population into this country, and have it