

*Supply—Transport*

were not comparable. My whole argument has been this; that the railways of Canada were built up in order to consolidate the country and make confederation possible, and that the discrimination in the rates that now exist imposes a burden on one part or two parts of the country, whichever way you look at it, which should be borne by the whole country. In some manner we have to arrive at a rate structure which would fairly distribute the burden. I will go a step further and say that, in view of the peculiar difficulties to which I have referred, if, after we have integrated our transportation facilities, the railways are still unable to haul commodities at reasonable rates, there should be a method of subsidizing the railways. But again I would not suggest subsidizing a privately owned railway system.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

The committee resumed at three o'clock.

**Mr. Blackmore:** Mr. Chairman, first on behalf of the members of the Social Credit group I should like to commend the leader of the opposition on his excellent speech this morning in opening the discussion on the matter of freight rates. I was wondering whether I could recall any time since I came here in 1936 when any representative of an Ontario or Quebec constituency rose and had anything to say about the shameful, inadequate, inequitable freight rates which prevail from coast to coast in Canada. I am sorry to say I had not been able to recall any occasion until the leader of the opposition did it today. Therefore I look upon that speech as a fine augury of good things to come.

Since coming to the house I myself have never failed in any one year to give at least one talk on the injustice which prevails in the Dominion of Canada in the matter of freight rates. For the Social Credit group I should like to say to the leader of the opposition that we propose to support his motion to reduce the appropriation for the board of transport commissioners.

I do not wish to say anything unkind about the board of transport commissioners, but I am very much afraid that they have very little excuse, very little explanation for the things that have been allowed to continue in this country over these many years.

On May 16, 1950 I made a speech dealing with the freight rate question, as reported at page 2537 of *Hansard*. Because it was sub judice I deemed it inadvisable to go very far into the subject, but I will continue that speech today.

[Mr. Coldwell.]

My argument regarding freight rates is to be based on the freight rates as they obtained in Canada in the year 1938. Hon. members will then know that the abuses which I point out have been before the Board of Transport Commissioners for Canada long enough for any conscientious, open-minded group of people, desirous of seeing anything like justice in Canada, to have done something about this matter long ago.

There are five main general facts concerning the incidence of freight rates in Alberta with which I propose to deal. While these evils are observable in the other western provinces, they are not present to nearly as great an extent as they are in Alberta. We are at the apex of the costs going out, and we are at the apex of the costs coming in. They get us going and coming, and they all seem to think they have a perfect right to do anything they want to about Alberta. That is an astonishing thing, considering the fact that our province has never done anything that would justify anyone in supposing, so far as I know, that we do not propose to be an integral part of the Dominion of Canada, sharing the responsibilities of other Canadians and hoping to enjoy the privileges that are accorded to other Canadians.

In the first place, the ordinary consumers in Alberta are penalized for living in that province, so serious are the disadvantages of the freight rate structure as Alberta endures it.

Our primary producers in Alberta are inequitably handicapped by freight rates as compared with primary producers in other provinces of Canada. The freight rate structure in Alberta impedes ordinary economic development within the province more than it does that of any other province of Canada. Interprovincial trade between Alberta and British Columbia is hampered by inequitable freight rates, as is not the case in respect of interprovincial trade between any other two provinces of Canada, name whichever ones you desire to name. In effect a tariff wall has been erected around Alberta by freight rates, the object apparently being—designedly so, I fear—to keep Alberta products out of the markets of other provinces, and at the same time to open Alberta markets to the products of other provinces.

May I examine for a few minutes the statements which I have made in the light of facts that can be adduced?

First, as to the ordinary consumers of Alberta being penalized for living in Alberta, here are some figures which will startle anybody who gives them very much consideration. Flannelette blankets can be shipped from eastern Canada to Vancouver for \$1.75 a