

imposing themselves on the people of Canada at any expense. The various subsidies which have been granted by the government are not negotiated as part of a national plan. The Minister of Transport made that quite clear today as he backhanded the Atlantic area. They are negotiated in isolation.

There are abandoned track grants for the prairie area. There is the Maritime Freight Rates Act for the Maritime area. There are other vehicles by which money is put into the hands of the railroads. But none of them are part of a national plan. All of them are used as a method to assuage a region at a particular moment when the pot is beginning to boil. This is not the way things should be done. Being primarily in agriculture, I am concerned about the fact that over the last few years the government has allowed the railroads to stop their priority for perishable products. These include livestock, fruit, vegetables and fish, not to mention frozen foods.

There used to be a clause in all tariffs respecting perishable products which demanded that the railroads move them to their destination by the shortest possible route and with the quickest dispatch. But now the railroads can put a car of frozen food or of fresh food on any siding and leave it there as long as they like. They no longer have any responsibility for its delivery in good condition. In such a circumstance, if you lodge a claim against the railroad it will remain on its books and on yours ad infinitum, while the railroad finds all kinds of reasons to blame the shipper or receiver for neglect, which neglect was the fault of the carrier. It is in these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, that the government of Canada is asking members who represent agriculture, and members who represent the fisheries, to support a finance bill for the Canadian National railroad. I find this goes down as sour grapes.

There cannot be adequate rail facilities in this country as long as there is no control, no investigation, no interest shown by government in the service that is rendered by this form of transportation. I want to cite one particular instance close to home, and if the railways could be used to transport this particular product those railways would probably pass through my constituency and that of the hon. member for Madawaska-Victoria. But in this particular instance, because it would be a combination rate for the CNR and CPR between origin and destination, the rate is so high to carry the product from the northeast of New Brunswick to the southwest of New Brunswick that the manufacturer in the northeast has lost the business to an Ontario firm, which can ship the product more cheaply from a centre 500 or 600 rail miles further away from the point of consumption. This shows a lack of co-operation that hurts the country. It is something which should be investigated by the government and the Transport Commission.

I am sure it is not a unique situation. If you were to ship a car of potatoes to Newfoundland by CPR then the CNR says, "I am sorry, but you have cut our rail haul. We will have to add 20 cents a hundredweight to the rate." Then, people in Newfoundland would wonder why potatoes were so expensive coming off the CPR lines. That is part of the reason. It does not matter how many junction points the CNR has to take the car through, the result would probably be the same. This penalizes both the producer and the

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receiver of the product. These are things we must examine. Let us also take another look at areas where pooled rail lines could be operated to ease the economics of transportation. The railroad companies do not want to undertake this on their own, but they should be compelled by government to look at any means which would achieve reduced mileage of haul, and thus reduced rates. As I say, the railways do not want to do this themselves because of the freedom which has been given to the rail transportation industry in the Dominion of Canada by the legislation introduced and imposed by the government.

The problems exist from coast to coast. They are not unique to any particular area. As I have asked questions and received answers, evasive answers, incomplete answers, and no answers, I have wondered how I got into this maze of Alice in Wonderland. What is delaying the government? Is it looking for Merlin the magician to come from the court of King Arthur to solve the problems? Members of the government should put their heads together and give Canada the transportation policy which it so badly needs. Certainly, those people with the capability to ensure service by rail are not holding portfolios in this government. I plead with the government to come up with a rational solution for the rail transportation requirements of the country.

Other hon. members have spoken about air service. It certainly leaves much to be desired. I will not be repetitive in that regard except to associate myself with those who feel there is much to be desired in the service that is supplied by the nationally-owned air carrier. If the service provided by Canadian National Railways and Air Canada is an example of what nationalization of business can do, may God in His wisdom protect Canada from further nationalization.

● (1520)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jim Fleming (York West): Mr. Speaker, my comments on this particular piece of legislation will be brief. I rise only because I was prompted by what I thought was an outstanding speech made yesterday by the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher). He outlined the problem in his part of Ontario. This problem has existed for several years, and I think it is something that demands attention not only from the people in that area but, if we believe that we represent our ridings as members of the parliament of Canada then we, too, should rise to defend the principles he put forth.

In this connection I should like to refer to one particular town in one geographical area of Canada where I spent my summers. My family roots are in that area; it is the town of Wiarton which was built for the logging industry many, many years ago. Situated at the base of the Bruce peninsula, it is the entrance to what will become the playland of the urbanites of Ontario. The provincial government of Ontario has already spent a great deal of money to expropriate land and build a huge parkland to which people can escape from the cities to enjoy the beauties of the Canadian countryside.

The people in the hamlets and towns in the peninsula, however, are isolated from the rest of Canada. If someone