

*The Address—Mr. Baxter*

suspend for a further period of one year, if in its judgment the then existing conditions justify the same. And your committee recommend that suitable legislation be enacted to make effective this recommendation.

That was, in clear terms, a recommendation for a general suspension. It carried out the provisions of the Railway Act, which otherwise would have expired on the sixth of July, 1922. The recommendation of that committee was made, as the report stated, in view of the great necessity for a general reduction in freight rates on basic commodities as a whole, and in what was considered to be the general public interest, and not in consequence of the proposals for rate reduction made by the railways. We had that point of view, then, from the committee, that there was a great necessity for a general reduction in the freight rates on basic commodities. Our friends in the West were, quite naturally, striving to hold an advantage that they had, an advantage which had been purchased not by them alone but by all the people of Canada, and purchased under conditions very materially differing from the post-war conditions in connection with the railways. Now, the very fact that we meet here in a parliament duly convened emphasizes this other fact, that there always is, always will be and of necessity must be, sectionalism. I do not mean sectionalism in the improper sense by which one section tries to get something to which it is not entitled. I mean sectionalism in the fair sense in which it ought to be used in parliamentary institutions,—that sectionalism which presents its local difficulties, and its means or want of means of meeting these difficulties, and comes to parliament in a general conference to decide what can best be done in the common interests of the whole country, from east to west and from north to south. We do not always accomplish that, but I trust that, even though there are misunderstandings, we always have that point of view in mind. And it is with that point of view in mind that I address some remarks to this Chamber this afternoon. As I say, the West came here feeling that they had a right to something, to wit, certain rates lower than anybody else in the country could enjoy for the movement of commodities. They felt it was not fair to deprive them of that advantage. They felt that it was a difficult matter for the people of the West to market their wheat crop, and that, transportation being so vital an element, they ought not to be asked to give up the privilege they had been enjoying. Now, I am not saying that their point of view was correct. Indeed, I do not think it was wholly correct, but I say it was a point of view that had a right to be presented and to be taken into consideration in framing any policy. But it had

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a right to be taken into consideration only along with the requirements, the difficulties and the needs of all other portions of Canada served by the railways. And in considering this matter it was for the government to formulate a policy which should do as equal justice to all sections as it is possible for any policy to secure. The government shrank from taking up that burden. They felt they were not strong in the House, and they proceeded to make a bargain with my friends to my left, by means of which they got all the political support they could obtain and gave in return—I will not say lavishly, but nevertheless they gave—rights or privileges in utter disregard of the Maritime provinces, of the province of Quebec, the province of Ontario and the province of British Columbia. That may sound harsh, and I do not want to put anything bitterly; but it seems to me that it is just a fact. I am going to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to follow me, while I discuss the case of my own province of New Brunswick although I can only do it in the most imperfect manner. Without trying to get anything for New Brunswick that it should not have. I think it is my duty to put before this House the difficulties under which that province labours because of that very bargain which the government entered into for the purpose of obtaining political support. If that agreement did not hurt the province of New Brunswick, I suppose I would not say anything about the matter; and I presume that some hon. members may say that New Brunswick was not hurt. Now, I think that, from the very evidence taken by the committee that considered this matter and which was then shut off, I can demonstrate to the House that New Brunswick in some particulars was rather cruelly hurt. We do not pretend down there to be grain growers. On the other hand, we do not allege that grain growers have no rights; we think they have a right to fair treatment; But we think we have a right to fair treatment ourselves, and we cannot see why a large section of New Brunswick—I will refer particularly to the counties of Carleton and Victoria, where potato growing is largely carried on—should be injured by reason of any agreement with any other part of the country. We cannot see why any man in this House possessed of a fair mind should vote to destroy, to hamper or to impede the potato growers of these counties in order that some portion of the middle West might derive a tremendous advantage. One hon. member from the province of New Brunswick belonging to the group to my left did vote so, carried away, again, by the party spirit. The party meant more to him than his constitu-