

Interim Supply

I suggest, also, that the application of those principles to which I have referred would provide for the development and co-ordination of research between the federal and provincial governments, between the universities and the private organizations in this country and the educational programs which have to do with conservation. It would provide, also, for a satisfactory division of financial responsibility as among the various groups concerned.

I have always maintained that the federal government has a definite interest in the development and conservation of our natural resources because of the large revenue it draws as a result of the utilization of these resources. I may say at this point that I am very glad the federal government has shown its interest in these matters by its offer of co-operation with the government of British Columbia in the building of dams on the Columbia river. Then again, if my suggestion is carried out, we could undertake over-all planning to avoid duplication of effort. At the present time there is some duplication of research, some duplication of educational effort and some duplication of expenditure in several directions which could be avoided if there were over-all planning among federal and provincial governments, private industry and other interested groups.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I think if we had the type of conference I have suggested it would give rise to a national publicity with regard to the importance of this question which is lacking at the present time, and an awareness of the situation which the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources has said from time to time is lacking among the general public of this country. We would focus attention across the nation on the national nature of this problem; and the value of the attendant publicity. This is very necessary if we are going to interest large numbers of people in what at times appears to many of them to be quite an abstract question. That is all I have to say at this time but I do hope the government will give consideration to the representations I have made.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to take very long in saying what I have to say, but I do want to mention something about the freight rate structure of this country. I notice in the supplementary estimates an item of \$1,500,000 for assistance to the Atlantic provinces by way of concessions in regard to freight rates.

Let me say immediately, Mr. Chairman, that I am very pleased indeed that some action is being taken to give the maritimes an adjustment in their freight rate structure.

[Mr. Herridge.]

It is long overdue. One of the main things holding back the general development of this country is the unsatisfactory freight rate structure. This applies not only to the maritimes but also to western Canada, and I was amazed the other day when the Minister of Transport told me, while I was discussing this subject in the house, that he could not see any reason why consideration should be given at this time to investigating the freight rate structure of western Canada at the same time that we were doing something about it in the maritimes.

The inference, of course, was that western Canada had been doing rather well, and that therefore it did not need any assistance in this matter of the freight rate structure.

But the obvious thing should be clear even to the Minister of Transport, namely that since about 1945 there has been a continuous increase in freight rates. The Gordon commission pointed out the fact, I believe, that there had been increases in freight rates of 100 per cent, I think it was, since 1945. I am only speaking from memory now but I think my memory serves me right.

Every one of us in this house knows, or should know, that whenever a general freight rate increase is allowed by the board of transport commissioners, that increase is not applied evenly across the country. If it were applied evenly across the country then of course there would not be so much objection. But in the two central provinces—and they are the provinces that are considered to be in what they call a competitive area—the freight rates are not increased to the same extent as they are in those other provinces which are considered to be in the non-competitive area, namely the maritime provinces or the Atlantic provinces and the western provinces. Because of this continual increasing of the freight rates over and above the freight rate structure which exists in the central provinces, those two extremes of the country are put in a very difficult position. Whatever I say about western Canada applies equally to the maritimes. That is why I am pleased that some relief is being given to the maritime provinces in these estimates.

We out in western Canada find it difficult indeed to compete in the manufacture of those articles that are being produced here in Ontario. For instance, if we want to go into the furniture business, we find that to have the raw lumber shipped out to the province of Alberta, Saskatchewan or British Columbia, but to the two prairie provinces particularly, it costs us more than it does for the central provinces to ship out the manufactured product. As for the canning industry in connection with garden products such as peas, carrots, beets and things of that nature,