

Supply—Transport

base for Canada are good road facilities and lower freight rates for slow growth areas.

It is with these thoughts and sentiments in mind that I am pleading with the Minister of Transport, his colleagues in the cabinet and all members of this house to give the Ottawa valley in particular and northern Ontario in general new hope by reducing the freight rates between the Ottawa valley and Montreal and between this area and the golden horseshoe so that all these places can look forward to greater progress and a greater share in the fruits of the Canadian economy.

I am not one who believes that a rapidly growing economy is dangerous to a country but I am one who believes that it is very unfair, as well as poor economic and social planning when particular areas within a nation are permitted to outgrow their labour supply and create densely populated areas which in turn pose additional problems for government, while other sections of the country are allowed to stagnate or even decline. I want to see a Canada that is continually working toward economic unity and economic equality because these two criteria will create an attitude of mind which will make all people feel that they are indeed a part of the Canadian nation. This in turn will create a strong Canadian nationalistic spirit which will go far toward strengthening confederation.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I urge the Minister of Transport and the government to introduce a downward revision of the freight rates between the Ottawa valley and Montreal, between northern Ontario and southern Ontario including points in the golden horseshoe so that people of the northern areas will be able to take up life anew and get down to the business of bringing greater progress to their regions. I wish to thank the minister for the kind attention he has given me and to assure him that if he takes the initiative in these matters he will be loudly cheered onward by the voices of the Ottawa valley and the north.

Mr. Smallwood: Mr. Chairman, I should like to spend a little time discussing the railroad situation in western Canada. The Minister of Transport has had many requests made to him. I do not intend to make any requests but I should like to give him a little information which he seems unable to obtain from his colleagues in the government.

The slow movement of grain from the west to the Pacific coast has created a very serious

[Mr. Hopkins.]

situation. I say at the outset that the Minister of Finance who is responsible for the Wheat Board has not been doing his job, possibly not because he does not possess the ability but because there are too many other matters which demand his attention. He has let the farmers of western Canada down. Surely the Prime Minister can turn this responsibility over to the Minister of Agriculture. At least he goes out to the west and listens to the farmers' side of the story. We have had a great deal of confusion among the cabinet with respect to the wheat situation. It reminds me of Nero fiddling while Rome burned. The ministers on the front bench have been fiddling and fumbling and the farmers have not been getting their grain to market.

● (3:50 p.m.)

On Wednesday, February 9 the Minister of Finance was asked a question by the hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale respecting final payments for grain. As recorded at page 963 of *Hansard* the hon. member asked this question:

Is the minister in a position now to inform the house if the Canadian Wheat Board is ready to make payments to western farmers, for which there is great need at the present time because of the slow movement of grain on the prairies?

The minister replied:

I do not accept the last part of the statement by the hon. member concerning the movement of grain. In fact, the movement of grain throughout Canada at this time is at a record pace.

I shall place figures on the record to show that one cannot pay any attention to the minister's answers. I have here a letter I received today. It is dated February 10 and I should like to put part of it on the record to show how serious is the situation in western Canada. It is from subdistrict 505 of the Alberta Wheat Pool and it points out that at Strome, Alberta, on the C.P.R. line, where the quota today is three bushels, there is still an estimated 150,000 bushels to be delivered at that point on that quota. They have orders for 42 cars but they cannot get these cars. At Bawlf there is practically the same situation, with orders for 43 cars, and at Daysland the situation is the same. The C.N.R. lines immediately to the north and south have 5 and 6 bushel quotas in comparison with the situation on the C.P.R. line.

The Minister of Agriculture went out to western Canada and when he came back he reported that the C.P.R. was definitely not doing the job in hauling grain. When he returned he, the Minister of Finance and the