

*Economic Rehabilitation*

debate when there are so many members here from the maritime provinces who are ready and willing to rise and express their feelings concerning their own area. However, I believe it is fitting that some speaker from the west should participate, and some speaker from the Social Credit group of which I have the honour of being a member.

I would say in a general way that I cannot see how we could possibly improve conditions in the maritimes if we continue to follow the same general policy which has caused so serious a deterioration in the maritimes ever since they entered confederation in 1867. The number of commissions that have been set up to examine into the situation in the maritimes is very considerable. We have had the Jones commission, the White commission, the Duncan commission and several others. Every one of those commissions has found a most undesirable state of affairs existing in the maritimes. Every one of them has found that condition exists because of certain other conditions which ought not to be there. But somehow or other nothing has ever been done about the situation.

I feel that it is idle to hope to have a sound and prosperous Canada unless we have a great and prosperous maritime section. I am convinced that something more has to be done than has been done in the past. I do not propose to go into this matter to any great extent tonight, but I may say I have been arrested by certain things which have come into my hands within the last few days. I have before me the statement of the city of Halifax to the royal commission on Canada's economic prospects, dated October, 1955. At the same time I have in my hands a copy of the statement by the government of Nova Scotia to the royal commission on dominion-provincial relations dated February, 1938. I have in my hands also the letter of transmittal by the Halifax city solicitor, Mr. C. P. Bethune, Q.C., dated October 18, 1955.

In these three documents one can find some most impressive reading. May I quote three or four statements from Mr. Bethune's letter. On page 2 I find this paragraph:

In the alternative, the only way in which such fair contribution by the government towards the cost of municipal services can be reduced is by the promotion of private business enterprises in this city which will contribute to the city's costs.

The government to which he is referring there is the dominion government.

In this, we believe, the government should assume some responsibility.

The next paragraph is most striking.

So far as Halifax is concerned, it is submitted that the city's natural endowment calls for the development of trade through the port. This will necessitate the provision of greater pier and storage

[Mr. Blackmore.]

facilities, such as those proposed as far back as 1913, when plans were made by the federal government to develop the port on both sides of the harbour by the construction of the sea wall and piers. Certain land was then earmarked for improvement but unfortunately the plans were not proceeded with.

The question that every member of this house ought to ask himself, Mr. Speaker, is, why were the 1913 plans not proceeded with, and why have they not been proceeded with up to the present time? That seems to be the difficulty in respect of all the maritime provinces. There seem to be a great many promises and commitments on the part of the federal government, either explicit or implicit, but never anything done. It reminds me of the story of a certain British leader who was said to be always on horseback but never going forward. In my judgment it is high time we began to go forward.

Let us follow through in respect of this dock at Halifax, and the plans for making this port a good port. Anyone would say that the very first thing that could be done and should be done by the dominion government is to build that dock and make the port of Halifax so that it will take care of the needs of all commerce today. I do not suppose that even such an apologist as the hon. member who just took his seat, who seemed to spend all his time trying to make it appear that Nova Scotia was in fact doing all right, that they did not have anything to worry about, really believes that. I suggest that he ought to be ready to explain why that port has not been made as it ought to be, and he should be here on his feet demanding that that port should be made as it ought to be. Yet he comes up here and apologizes for what is going on down there.

Let us just consider another statement or two from this same letter:

Much of the land so earmarked has now gone to other uses, and unless immediate attention is given to the matter, all that remains will be otherwise occupied, and the costs of acquiring the same for port development will be prohibitive.

That will mean that the port of Halifax, in all probability, will never be made the port it ought to be as the eastern seaboard port of Canada; yet nothing is being done, and the hon. member for Colchester-Hants rises in his place here and apologizes for what is going on.

Let me read another paragraph:

Another essential is the improvement of transportation facilities serving the port, both highway and railway, in order that this Canadian port may be able to meet the competition of foreign Atlantic ports.

Surely the federal government can take care of these highway needs. Let no one rise in his place here and pretend that it cannot