

## Supply—Transport

filing of the new schedule, by rate increases which were completely unjustified at this time.

**Mr. Chevrier:** The hon. gentleman is not arguing, is he, that the benefit of the one and one-third rule has been wiped out by these increased transcontinental rates?

**Mr. Low:** Comparatively, no; but really, yes.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Only a limited number of rates have been increased, whereas the one and one-third rule applies to all.

**Mr. Low:** That is quite true, but what I am trying to get at is this: If the railways are successful in contravening the intent of this law by filing and having approved a new schedule that applies to even a few of these rates, is there not danger that they will be able to do the same thing for all the rates? I am protesting against the fact they were able to get that new schedule at all at this time. As I said, canned goods now form a very important item in the diet of our people in the prairie provinces, especially during the winter. They do get large quantities of canned goods from eastern Canada, and that is one of the items included in the new schedule. That is what I am talking about.

**Mr. Chevrier:** I point out that the railways did not require the approval of the board for the increase in the transcontinental rates, because they are competitive rates.

**Mr. Green:** They are lower than the standard rates.

**Mr. Chevrier:** That is right; and for that reason I do not think it can be said that the board was in error in taking away, if this in fact has taken away, some of the benefit of the one and one-third rule. I shall deal with that later, and I think I will be able to establish that it is not nearly as bad as my hon. friend anticipates. Certainly I agree with him that the Canadian National Railways at least led me to believe there would be no increase.

**Mr. Low:** As they did me. May I say to the minister I certainly look forward to having the information he can give, because I am not talking with a profound knowledge of it. All I have, of course, are the details concerning the schedule of rates and the changes which have been made. I am in the dark as to why they were made. I am sure the minister must admit one thing, however; that without the support of the Canadian National Railways that new schedule could not have been filed and approved. The Canadian Pacific could not do it alone. Therefore today the Canadian National stands accused.

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** I am sure the minister must be pleased with the compliments he has received on the remarks he made at the opening of this discussion this afternoon. I suppose his work is so onerous and so extensive that he might be pardoned if he were not aware of some of the points brought out by the previous speaker. When we think of the Department of Transport, which is under the control of the minister, dealing with airways, steamships, railways and now going into trucking and bus services, we can easily see that the minister is becoming an emperor in the transportation field in Canada. We have T.C.A., Canadian National Steamships, Canadian National Telegraphs, overseas communications, and so forth; and I am sure everyone sympathizes with the minister in the great responsibilities he has to carry, and they are very pleased to see him so courteous in dealing with them. Therefore it is to be regretted that sometimes we have to criticize him.

**Mr. Chevrier:** I await the rest.

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** Well, I have not very much to criticize the minister for today. I am particularly interested in what is going on in Newfoundland, and the reports I have from there are very favourable.

When the delegation from Newfoundland was in Ottawa considering the terms for confederation, they placed before the representatives of the federal government a statement dealing with railway affairs in that province, the operation of the railway itself and the steamship lines under its control. The representatives of the federal government, probably including the minister, felt satisfied that the service being given down there was very good and did not need very much extension at the time. They did realize, of course, that the railway was not in very good shape and that the steamships needed replacement; they were old, and had been in service for many years.

However—and this is a point I have brought up here several times, though perhaps hon. members do not fully appreciate it—when union went into effect on April 1, 1949 there was a complete transformation in the import trade of the country and the railway services became far from adequate. Our trade with Canada previously had been brought partly by water and partly by rail. But it doubled; and now the passenger traffic has doubled. Of course, the railway was not built to cope with this development in freight and passenger traffic over the line, and it has fallen behind. The people in business, especially in St. John's, are complaining about the inadequacy of the service. I am glad to see that the vice-president and manager of the Atlantic region has been in St. John's recently and