

*Supply—Transport*

**Mr. Lesage:** You are thinking of the Shawinigan bridge.

**Mr. Balcer:** No. In 1936, at the time the national harbours board took over the control of the Three Rivers harbour, the total length of the wharves was 7,400 feet, and there were 8 transit warehouses with an area of 175,000 square feet. In 1956 equipped wharves measured 7,650 feet, which means that from 1936 to 1956 only 250 feet were added. Surely, Mr. Chairman, it cannot be claimed that a great effort was made in those 20 years. As far as sheds are concerned, there are 229,000 square feet in 1956 compared to 175,000 square feet in 1936, which is an increase of some 50,000 square feet.

**Mr. Lesage:** Where is the need?

**Mr. Balcer:** Grain elevators were filled to the limit last summer, as well as an adjoining shed. From June on, Three Rivers shippers had to turn down business due to the lack of storage space and accommodation.

Again I urge that appropriate sheds be built at Three Rivers harbour. One built a few years ago is already inadequate. For instance, last year, last spring I should say, carbide was shipped by a Shawinigan Falls company and they had to use tarpaulins to shield the goods which were left on the wharves, because there was no room inside the sheds.

It does not make sense, Mr. Chairman. I protest against the national harbours board policy of always waiting until the situation has become practically desperate before making the least improvement.

I believe it would be only fair to Three Rivers stevedores, and to the manufacturers and the whole population, if those in authority went ahead and made improvements which would give a bit of favourable publicity to Three Rivers harbour and attract new customers and new shipping lines.

The minister asked a while ago, what was required to be done to Three Rivers harbour. This is one of this country's main eastern ports. However, it lacks all equipment, heavy or light, for handling cargoes. It is left to the stevedores to supply the cranes they may need.

Three Rivers harbour is the only one to show a profit, and the national harbours board should use some of this profit to equip the port and enable it to hold its own among the other national harbours once the St. Lawrence seaway project is carried out.

Up to now, Three Rivers harbour has got along and the stevedores there have not lost too many contracts. But it is precisely because the seaway project will soon be a fact, that we want to have the necessary equipment to receive the huge grain ships which we hope to see coming down to us from Montreal.

The royal commission of inquiry on coastal shipping in Canada has been holding hearings all over the country. We hope for the sake of Three Rivers that, as a result of such inquiry, coastal shipping on the great lakes will be restricted to the North American fleets, so that lakers may carry cargoes down to the ports of Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec where they could be transhipped, so as to encourage the development of new industries in this area and bring prosperity to the cities located on the banks of the St. Lawrence below Montreal.

We wish every success to the great lakes ports, we wish them to double, treble, quadruple or even quintuple their shipping activities, but we ask for a fair treatment from the national harbours board. We ask them to show a little more foresight. We ask them to bear in mind what the situation is going to be once the St. Lawrence seaway is completed. Finally, we ask that the necessary steps be taken to ensure the prosperity of Three Rivers harbour, the only port which has shown a surplus.

**Mr. Langlois (Gaspé):** May I put a question to the hon. member for Three Rivers? If I understood correctly, he said a moment ago that he favours the restriction of coastal trade and wants maritime transportation to be limited to ships of Canadian registry. Shall we infer that he is stating his party's policy?

**Mr. Balcer:** Mr. Chairman, this matter is now being considered by the royal commission on Canadian coastal trade. I simply recalled a wish expressed before that body when the corporation of the city of Three Rivers submitted its brief. I need not state my or his party's policy since the commission has not yet completed its work.

**Mr. Lesage:** There is no need for the hon. member for Three Rivers to state our policy.

(Text):

**Mr. Decore:** I should like to draw to the minister's attention a matter which I have