

Supply—Transport

and it looks to me as though there is not the slightest possibility of the board of transport commissioners carrying out an investigation on that particular scale.

Today the minister says they are busy investigating the forms of waybills. He says that is going to take them months and months. That is a far cry from a general investigation of our freight rate structure in Canada. I do ask the minister to tell us frankly today whether it is expected the board of transport commissioners will carry out such a broad inquiry. If they are going to do it, all right, but they should be busy at it now. It appears to me as though the government is waiting for the report of the royal commission on transportation, and that this whole plan of having the board of transport commissioners make a general inquiry has been sidetracked, if not completely abandoned. If that is the case, the house should know. Let there be no misunderstanding or confusion about the situation today.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Chairman, I do not think there is the slightest misunderstanding, neither is there any confusion. I wish my hon. friend would decide what it is he has in his mind. By that I mean, when it was suggested that the board of transport commissioners undertake a freight rate investigation in Canada under P.C. 1487, my hon. friend said, "No, we should not do that."

Mr. Green: No.

Mr. Chevrier: Just a moment, let me finish.

Mr. Green: On a question of privilege, the minister must not put words into my mouth. This happened two years ago, but I think if he will look at *Hansard* he will find I made no such statement at that time. I do not think the minister should base his argument on something I did not say.

Mr. Chevrier: I am not going to argue with my hon. friend, Mr. Chairman, as to his exact words. Perhaps he did not say no, and I accept his statement. I know his whole attitude was that of one opposed to the order in council 1487, and *Hansard* will bear me out. What he did want and what his colleagues wanted was a royal commission on transportation. The hon. member is quite right when he says I opposed it, because at that time I did not feel it was the thing—

Mr. Green: The minister is making a statement—

Mr. Chevrier: I did not interrupt my hon. friend.

[Mr. Green.]

Mr. Green: I did not make a misstatement. At the time this debate took place, I do not believe I was in Ottawa at all. I spoke on freight rates either in the fall of 1948—I believe I did speak later in that session of 1948. When I dealt with this royal commission and the general investigation by the board of transport commissioners, it was a year later, in 1949. At that time, the minister was asked how he was going to sort out these two inquiries. There were others who, in 1948, took the attitude the minister is now mentioning, but I did not take it.

Mr. Chevrier: I do not want to get into an argument with my hon. friend. On the other hand, I do not like him to make the statement that I have been ridiculing the attitude taken by him and by his colleagues. It is not my habit to do that. The point I am making is this. When we brought forward order in council 1487 for a general investigation of freight rates, that was objected to generally because it was said we had not gone far enough. Then, when the government decided to establish a royal commission and, at the request of the provinces put into the terms of reference almost everything the provinces requested, the answer then was, "That is not sufficient; why do you not carry on your investigation under P.C. 1487?" I have been trying to explain to the hon. member who first asked this question and I am trying to explain to the house now, that it is not possible, as I understand it, for the provinces to be in two places at the same time. Is this clear?

It is the intention of the board of transport commissioners and of the government to see to it that the general investigation of the freight rates structure in Canada be continued under P.C. 1487. My hon. friend asked for a clear and frank statement. I made the statement last year—I think I made it in answer to a question asked by the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Argue)—and I make it now, that the only reason why the board cannot proceed more quickly and with more dispatch is that it must, of necessity, hear the representations of the provinces; and until it hears the representations of the provinces, how is it going to consider the equalizing of the freight rates structure?

After the royal commission on transportation has made its report, it may be that the board of transport commissioners may have enough information to warrant a decision. I do not know. But my understanding is that they will want to hear representations and submissions from the provinces. They cannot do so at the moment because the provinces