

Taken by itself, that sounds like a high principled statement. But when it is applied to the fact that we have this inequality as between different sections of Canada, for a member to stand in his place and say that he is condoning—

Mr. SINNOTT: Read on farther.

Mr. KNOWLES: If I had the time I would, but it would make it look worse. The hon. member knows that what he has done is simply to accept the decision of the government to condone the aggravation of discriminations and inequalities already existing.

I join with members from seven provinces of Canada, both east and west, in expressing the view that we are not seeking to stir up conflict between different sections of Canada. What we are asking is that inequalities which are the cause of potential conflict be removed. A few days ago when the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) was asked on the orders of the day a question about the implementing of the oats and barley provision in another act, he replied that the governments of two provinces had expressed their opposition to these provisions, and made the assumption that those governments therefore spoke for the people of those two provinces. I doubt that; but I suggest to the government that, if that principle is to be applied, then surely the time to apply it is now, when the premiers and the governments of seven provinces have expressed their views with respect to this matter. As others have done, I call the attention of the government to the fact that Liberal newspapers in various parts of Canada, strongly supporting the government, have criticized the government mercilessly for its action on this matter. I hope that even yet the government will change its position and pay heed to the requests of the premiers of the seven provinces for action which will lead to more unity in this country.

When I rose to my feet I indicated that in the main I wished to direct my remarks to only one phase of the matter. I refer to railway wage rates. Let me say at the outset that I decry as strongly as I can the way in which the wage question has been mixed into this freight rates issue. Let me state clearly that I recognize, as everyone must, that the wages the railways can pay must have a relationship to the revenues of those railways. But that does not justify mixing up the present request of the employees for increased wages with this particular way of getting more revenue for the railways, namely by an over-all 21 per cent increase. As my colleague,

the hon. member for Swift Current (Mr. Bentley), has already pointed out, the tears that have been shed in this house with respect to the workers and their request for increased wages strike us as being crocodile tears indeed.

Mr. GARDINER: Mr. Mosher did that.

Mr. KNOWLES: Not at all, but the Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier) certainly indulged in crocodile tears the other day. I submit that when some of us have called upon that same minister to do something about the pension rights of Canadian National employees he has found excuses for taking no action along that line.

Mr. CHEVRIER: The hon. gentleman knows full well that the question of pensions for the employees of the Canadian National Railways is one which is governed by the administration of the railway and not by the minister. The hon. member should not make the statement which he has just made and which creates the inference that it is one for the minister to decide.

An hon. MEMBER: He is full of that.

Mr. KNOWLES: The minister recently found it possible to deal with that matter on the floor of this house and to defend the action of the government and say that it was his view that he should not take any action to seek an increase in the pensions of Canadian National employees in view of the fact that his colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott), had taken that view with respect to superannuated civil servants.

Mr. CHEVRIER: The hon. member had better read the speech.

Mr. KNOWLES: I certainly did read it; I read it again in preparation for these remarks. Similarly the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) has indicated solicitude on his part for the railroad workers, but I would remind the house of the struggle we have had through the years to try to get the Minister of Labour to take proper action in connection with the pension rights of Canadian Pacific employees.

Mr. CHEVRIER: I think the record will show who did the most for the railroad workers as far as parties go.

Mr. KNOWLES: The record certainly shows that in 1945 the Minister of Labour appointed an investigator to find out whether a royal commission should be appointed to look into this matter. When that investigator reported back in precise language that a royal commission should be appointed the