

*Rate Structure on Freight on Maritimes*

considers it to be an easier job than his previous portfolio, we will try to convince him in the next hour that this is not so.

It seems to me that we have to deal with the whole question of the change that has been made. As was pointed out by my hon. friend for Kings, the change has been made without going before any judicial body which would examine the effect it will have upon the industries of the region concerned. I ask the minister to take particular notice of this fact. I believe that the change in rates and the elimination of the less than carload rates, with the substitution of express rates at a much higher figure, will impose a tremendous hardship on all small businesses; and the maritimes are full of small businesses. It is in small businesses that for many, many years the people of the maritimes have been employed.

Therefore, it seems to me this is a special situation so far as the maritimes are concerned and the minister should seriously reconsider this new policy. He should also consider that there are only a few industries producing goods in sufficient quantity to take advantage of carload shipments, the availability of transport trucks and that sort of thing. It was my understanding during the debate on transportation that we were looking for a national transportation policy for this country. Ever since I was honoured by being elected a member of this house I have heard the cry, regardless of the complexion of the government in office, for a national transportation policy.

I am sure that every hon. member who listened to the debate on transportation felt that we were perhaps now moving toward a national transportation policy. As I understood what was said in that debate, and as it was explained to us, the medium of transportation that would be used would be the most economical. I believe that was part of the argument used in favour of the act as it now stands. My hon. friend for Cumberland is quite correct when he says that this whole question of transportation is as old as confederation. We all know it is as old as confederation. We all know that what made confederation possible was the promise of the Fathers of Confederation that railways would be built. At that time railways were the medium of transportation. We have built railways to the east.

As I am sure the minister knows from his reading of the history, preferential rates were extended to the maritimes at the time of the building of the Intercolonial Railway. Later,

[Mr. Flemming.]

the railway was built connecting the province of British Columbia with central Canada. This made the whole of the country one new nation. Part of the deal by which confederation became possible, concerned the question of transportation. Today, transportation is just as important as it was in those days. Perhaps it is now even more important. Therefore, I appeal to the minister to review this whole question.

I have some information in this respect. I am told that in the constituency I have the honour to represent in this chamber some industries will be most adversely affected by this change in policy. I am sure that the point raised by my hon. friend from Kings with respect to cubic content is very detrimental to the producers of potato chips. While I cannot speak with authority as a result of having contacted these producers, I have no reason to think that the information at my disposal is anything but accurate.

Therefore, I ask the minister to look into the question of this particular product. Nothing could be more important than that we have this industry in our constituency. We have several large food processing plants, and the potato chip industry and the transportation of this product is most important. Anyone who read the last issue of the *Executive* magazine will have seen the picture of the two McCain boys on the front page, with their families. I must say this is a most attractive picture and I commend it to the attention of the minister, if he has not already seen it, because it is an excellent piece of work.

We are very proud of the McCain family, what they have accomplished and the fact that they have a world wide market for their product. They have obtained a market for the produce of the farms, not only for potatoes but for various other products processed in their plants. We view with a great deal of alarm and misgiving any proposal that would in any way harm this industry.

We have the Hatfields in Hartland and the Piries in Victoria County. We are concerned about the effect of this policy on such industries because we do not want anything to happen that would impair the activity of these companies or the people they employ. These people represent a great proportion of the available labour force in our locality.

In the lower part of New Brunswick we also produce candy. I am given to understand that there are increasing difficulties in the