

they have to sell. It is estimated—I have seen this in the press—that a thirty per cent increase in freight rates might amount to a sum of \$85,000,000. Surely that is a large sum of money, and the burden of supplying that money will bear most heavily on the people of western Canada, and will mean a considerable reduction in their standards of living.

I have here some figures on the financial position of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Its reserve in 1937 was \$91,000,000. In 1946 the reserve had increased to \$350,000,000, or an increase of some \$259,000,000 in that period of time. The funded debt of the C.P.R. in 1939 was \$228 million; in 1946 that debt had been decreased to \$83 million. Moreover, the average rate of funded debt paid by the C.P.R. in 1939 amounted to 4.1 per cent, whereas the average rate on their funded debt still held in 1945 was only 2.84 per cent. It is estimated that this decrease in the C.P.R. funded debt and the decrease in the carrying charge will amount to an annual saving to the C.P.R. of \$7,018,000.

Surely these figures do not in any way suggest that the C.P.R. is in financial straits. Certainly it is not a poor company that needs greater consideration from the people of this country.

The C.P.R. too, I notice, is asking for additions and betterments to railway property amounting to \$15,235,000; asking for \$15 million out of the freight rates of this country to provide for additions and betterments. Surely additions and betterments are capital extensions and capital investments, and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company should not wish to ask the people of Canada to provide money for this purpose through freight charges, whether increased or otherwise.

Mr. Walker referred—

Mr. CHEVRIER: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to interrupt the hon. gentleman. He has been speaking about freight rates for some time, but the moment he starts to discuss evidence before the hearing I think he is entirely out of order.

Mr. ARGUE: I will accept the correction.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the hon. member commenced his speech I referred to the fact that discussion in this house of the application for an increase in freight rates was out of order. I read a lengthy memorandum which Mr. Speaker had prepared, and I believe all hon. members agreed that it was not in order to discuss at the present time an increase in freight rates. It was however, I took it, the consensus of all hon. members that the hon. member for Wood Mountain

[Mr. Argue.]

might make a brief statement because other hon. members had done so. I do not think it was the feeling of the house that an extended argument on freight rates should be allowed at this time.

Mr. KNOWLES: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I ask you to consider the portion of the memorandum which you read in which reference was made to the freedom of the press. It was pointed out that that freedom was not denied by the understanding that the press cannot discuss matters that are *sub judice*. I would call your attention to the fact that the press is discussing this matter quite freely, which would seem to suggest that it is not *sub judice*, and I would press the view that members of parliament should have as much freedom to discuss these matters here as is accorded the press.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I was not here when you read the ruling, and I knew nothing about it until my colleague the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) drew it to my attention. I do not think it was the intention of the ruling that there should be no discussion at all on generalities, so far as the application was concerned. But the moment there is discussion concerning the evidence before the board, which is a court of record, then that is tantamount to discussing a case which is before a court, and I am sure the hon. member for Wood Mountain had no such intention. Last night one hon. member referred to a rate in general and went on to say that it had been reduced. I do not think there can be objection to that particular discussion; but when there is reference to the evidence which is before a court, on a hearing upon which there has been no decision, surely that is clearly out of order.

Mr. KNOWLES: I would point out equally that there has been no definite ruling on the matter. A memorandum has been read and a suggestion made.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): The minister says it is a court of record. I assume that must be a provision of the Railway Act. I do not remember it.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Yes.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is a provision of the Railway Act. I think I have allowed the hon. gentleman wide latitude and I suggest to him that he refrain from any further discussion of the application for an increase.

Mr. ARGUE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not wish to discuss the application, but there are two or three points to which I wish