

Supply—Transport

Then let the commission go to work next on the problem of considering ways and means of financing such a freight rate structure.

I thought the point made by the leader of the opposition was very well taken when he said that there are two vast rocky wastes crossed every day by trains travelling from coast to coast. The one in northern Ontario is a thousand miles of waste where almost nothing but costs are entailed for a train travelling through there. Who pays for all that waste effort? In British Columbia the trains cross the great wastes of the Rockies. Who pays for that waste which gives no return? The next question is, who do you think ought to pay for it? Do you think the people of the three prairie provinces ought to pay the cost of these unprofitable expensive wilderness journeys? Can any man see any reason why that should be? Granted that we Canadians need a railroad to go through the rocky wastes, granted it is for the benefit of Ontario and Quebec as much as it is for the benefit of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta or British Columbia, let me ask in all simplicity who should pay for the waste? Certainly everybody in Canada should pay for it. Facing this question purely as a national problem, and remembering that we are concerned about the building of a great commonwealth where we can all be powerful and happy, will any man rise in this house and attempt to defend a situation where Ontario and Quebec pay 10 cents a hundred for petroleum transportation that costs Saskatchewan 26 cents a hundred? Will any man say that Ontario and Quebec are paying their share? Someone may ask if I am advocating an increase in the freight rates of those two provinces. I advocate nothing in that respect; I simply say let us turn that over to this commission and let them talk the thing through very carefully. Our two great railroads are a national asset and a national necessity. They must be supported, and the only people in the world to support them are the people of Canada. Can we devise a means whereby each and everyone in Canada can contribute equitably to the cost of supporting our railways? Then if we deem it inadvisable to raise freight rates in order to provide enough money to support the railroads, let us determine to what extent we must contribute subsidies from the national treasury of Canada to make up the amount necessary to maintain them.

That suggests a subsidy. I grant that; but let us turn the matter over to a commission which will be representative of all

the provinces, and let that commission determine whether as representatives of the people of Canada they would rather raise the money entirely from freight and passenger rates or only partly in that way and partly by means of a definite subsidy.

The Chairman: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but he has exhausted his time. Has the hon. member unanimous consent to continue?

Some hon. Members: No.

Some hon. Members: Go ahead.

Mr. Blackmore: I can conclude in just a moment if the committee would permit me.

Some hon. Members: No.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chairman: The hon. member may not continue without unanimous consent.

Mr. Blackmore: I do not want to continue if I have not unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: Go ahead.

The Chairman: Has the hon. member unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No.

Some hon. Members: Go ahead.

The Chairman: The hon. member can see that he has not unanimous consent. I am sorry.

Mr. Arsenault: Mr. Chairman, this question of freight rates is certainly one of the matters in which the people of Canada are most interested at the present time. After a careful study of this important matter, which carries with it the possibility of unpredictable repercussions upon the economic life of our nation, one would reach the conclusion that above the dollars and cents aspect a great principle is involved which cannot be overlooked by those of us who wish to maintain our present way of life.

There are at least two historic conceptions of how the subordination of the individual or of private enterprise to the common good is to be effected and maintained. One is that the state is the supreme entity and the people its instruments, in complete submission to its dictates and purposes. The other is that the people are supreme, that the state is the creation of their will and the instrument of their purpose to live together for the common good. A few years ago we ended the second world war fought to maintain this latter type of state and government. Our soldiers protected it from the enemies who would have destroyed it by force from without. Our task today is to protect it from