

Supply—Transport

faced with the same problem since parliament set up the board, and as a general rule they have taken the position that it is up to the board to decide these questions, not up to the governor in council.

Mr. Ross (Souris): I should like to support the remarks of the hon. member for Peace River, but in view of the statement just made by the minister I would like him to tell us who are the members of the transport board, that is the names of the various members, and what were their qualifications and experience for appointment to the board. What experience did they have in dealing with transportation problems, that is in railroading or otherwise, before their appointment?

Mr. Chevrier: I gave that information too, at some length, in the general freight rates debate that took place in this house in 1946 or 1947.

Mr. Ross (Souris): Are they the same members today?

Mr. Chevrier: I believe it was the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton who asked that question today; and the question was answered. If my hon. friend looks at that return, he will find it contains the names and occupations of those commissioners. I might be mistaken, and perhaps it was another hon. member who asked the question, but I think you will find the return was tabled today.

Mr. Ross (Souris): Does that return contain their past experience, as well as any previous experience they may have had in transportation matters before their appointment?

Mr. Chevrier: Yes.

Mr. Ross (Souris): Then, if it is a matter of a return, why not put it on *Hansard*?

Mr. Chevrier: It was put on *Hansard* today.

Mr. Ross (Souris): If it is a return, it does not appear on *Hansard*, but appears in *Votes and Proceedings*.

Mr. Chevrier: I have no objection. I am not trying to hide anything, and I hope my hon. friend is not attempting to indicate that I am. There is no secrecy about any of this information. I could give the names of the transport commissioners to my hon. friend now, but for the sake of saving time, I think he can find them in the return.

Mr. Knowles: It was an order for return.

Mr. Chevrier: What member was it?

Mr. Knowles: The member for Victoria-Carleton, and it was question No. 48.

Mr. Green: If the minister will recall, there was quite a lot of discussion about this question in 1948 and the year after. The board of

transport commissioners handed down its first judgment and then on April 7, 1948 the minister, who had been under considerable pressure on this question, made a statement of government policy, and I have that statement here. In it, he announced that there was to be this general investigation of freight rates conducted by the board of transport commissioners. The words used by the minister on that date were very significant. He said:

The government has taken into consideration the fact that no general investigation of freight rates has been made in Canada since that conducted in 1925 by the board of railway commissioners. In the circumstances, the government has decided it would be in the public interest to have the board of transport commissioners make a thorough investigation of the rate structure of railways and railway companies which are under the jurisdiction of parliament, with a view—

This is the crux of the whole plan.

—with a view to the establishment of a fair and reasonable rate structure which will, under substantially similar circumstances and conditions, be equal in its application to all persons and localities, so as to permit the freest possible exchange of commodities between the various provinces and territories of Canada and the extension of Canadian trade, both foreign and domestic, having due regard to the needs of agriculture and other basic industries. This investigation will be subject, of course, to the statutory provisions affecting freight rates known as the Maritime Freight Rates Act and the Crownsnest pass agreement.

Then, the minister tabled order in council P.C. 1487, to which he referred today, and which authorized the board of transport commissioners to make this general investigation of freight rates. The minister said that the government would not agree to a royal commission on transportation. Later in that year, as a matter of fact, after the Liberal convention, that policy was changed and a royal commission on transportation was set up.

In the session which followed, some of us pointed out to the minister that there was bound to be confusion between the functions of the board of transport commissioners conducting a general investigation into the whole freight structure, and the business of the royal commission on transportation. He ridiculed our remarks, but today he said the same thing himself in answer to the member for Assiniboia, that as the provinces could not deal with two investigations at the same time, they decided to make their representations before the royal commission. That is all water over the dam, of course, but I do think the minister should make it clear to the committee whether or not the board of transport commissioners is still to conduct a general investigation into the whole freight rate structure on the basis outlined in his remarks of April 7, 1948. The facts would seem to indicate that no such investigation is under way yet. Practically two years have elapsed,