

*Supply—Transport*

along nicely and it would be a tremendous help if we could get rid of this diversion charge.

**Mr. Chevrier:** This is the first time I have heard of this grievance and for this reason I cannot comment on it. Perhaps the hon. member will permit me to look into it.

**Mr. Knight:** I shall be pleased if the minister will do that. I am astonished that no one has brought this to his attention.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** This matter has been brought up on a number of occasions and representations have been made to the government to have this charge removed. It constitutes a discrimination against those who desire to use the port facilities at Churchill. Even in a normal year this costs the western farmers \$50,000 or more and there would seem to be no justification or excuse for it.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Does my hon. friend know if that is a national harbours board charge?

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I cannot say.

**Mr. Chevrier:** I have never heard of it.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I was under the impression that the charge was made directly by the elevator company which was requested to divert wheat through the Hudson bay route.

**Mr. Chevrier:** It is probably a wheat board matter and that is why it has not been brought to my attention. I am informed that it is, and I shall be glad to bring this matter to the attention of the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I certainly support my hon. friend. As I say, this matter has been raised on a number of occasions by the association that was set up to encourage traffic over the Hudson bay route. I should like to ask the minister if it is the intention to extend the facilities at Churchill? As the hon. member for Saskatoon city has said, last year the traffic over the Churchill route was something greater than it was during the 1930-34 period when the route was being used so extensively, and today there are the military considerations as well. That is one location so strategically important to the defence not only of the western provinces but of the northern region of our country that I should like the minister to say whether or not consideration has been given by his department to the extension or expansion of the facilities at present available. I was reading an article recently on the question of co-ordinated defence in North America, and the Hudson bay area received very high

[Mr. Knight.]

marks as an area where strategic considerations were of paramount importance. I should like to ask whether or not, between the minister's department and the Department of National Defence, plans are being worked out whereby the facilities there available might be expanded or will be expanded within the next year or so.

**Mr. Chevrier:** I presume the hon. member refers to port facilities?

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Yes.

**Mr. Chevrier:** That is a matter which we might discuss under the item for Churchill and the national harbours board.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** One never knows under what item to discuss these matters.

**Mr. Chevrier:** One is a railway matter and the other is a port matter.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** But the minister covers both.

**Mr. Chevrier:** The matter raised by my friend is clearly discussible under the other item. However, I can tell him this now—and I do not think it would vary when we come to the item later on—that if there is a greater movement of grain or of other traffic through the port of Churchill the national harbours board will make facilities available to meet that situation. The national harbours board informs me—and I have seen these facilities myself—that at the moment there are ample facilities to look after both incoming and outgoing traffic, certainly to look after incoming traffic because that is infinitesimal compared with the other. In so far as outgoing traffic is concerned, I think those who were at Churchill recently will have been impressed by the modern sheds and elevator, and there was even some reference by the hon. member for Souris to the drying facilities available there. I can tell the hon. member that at the moment I know of no item in the estimates to enlarge the facilities from the point of view of traffic.

Then there was the other question raised by the hon. member for Saskatoon and the hon. member for Lake Centre. Representations have been made to the government, particularly to the Canadian wheat board, for the cancellation of unwarranted diversion charges being made by western grain elevators of one and a half to two cents per bushel on grain when it is shipped to the port of Churchill. I presume that is what my hon. friend had in mind. The Department of Trade and Commerce advise that this matter was referred to the House of Commons standing committee when the chairman of the Canadian wheat board stated that no change in these traditional charges could be made at this time, and that statement met with the