

Transportation

shall not refer to them all, but I have them all here. I shall refer to one or two. I mentioned the three western wheat pools, which are joined as the Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers. I will read one or two of their recommendations:

Provision must be made to introduce in commission membership perhaps three or four informed laymen.

This point was expressed several times by witnesses, namely, the need to have laymen on the commission who could take a clear look at the whole situation. The thought expressed by some of these representatives from the west was that the commission, with all the members of the Board of Transport Commissioners embodied in it, would be fairly well railway-oriented. The purpose of this bill is to integrate all forms of transportation and that is why they asked for laymen to be on the commission. They said that this would guard against the possibility of the new look in Canadian transportation being thwarted or upset by those called upon to administer it.

I repeat that their thought was that the commission may be too much railway-oriented. They also made this statement:

We are unsure about the provisions which have to do with railway freedom in rate-making, unjust discrimination and undue preference, especially in an area like the prairies where there is really no effective competition to the railways.

That is a point I want to bring out again, that Saskatchewan is fairly well tied to railway transportation. They also said:

We want an opportunity to be heard in advance when the ground rules for costing procedures are being worked out by the commission, especially in connection with Crowsnest Pass rates.

They also made this recommendation, and it is the last one I shall quote:

There should be powers to allow for the refusing or granting of government payments where they are provided as a railway subsidy and for the withholding or granting of permission to abandon track-age or discontinue a service.

A great many changes were made to the bill as the result of the hearing of witnesses before the transport committee. With at least 60 amendments, the legislation we now have before us bears little resemblance to the bill initially given to the transport committee last October. That is why I think it is important that we spend a great deal of time on the clause by clause study of the bill. I have referred to some of the western presentations. There was also a combined brief from the western provinces and the maritimes in which

[Mr. Pascoe.]

the province of Saskatchewan did not participate. Saskatchewan is the province that could be most seriously affected by the provisions of Bill No. C-231, and to me it was very surprising that the Saskatchewan government's views were not more forcibly expressed. Saskatchewan has the greatest number of branch lines open to possible abandonment, despite the freeze on many lines until 1975 as indicated by the minister.

● (7:30 p.m.)

The departmental map which was issued from the minister's office clearly shows the number of branch lines in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan produces the most wheat which has to move by rail for export. The province's potash industry is expanding rapidly, and reasonable freight rates are vital for the long haul by rail to market. Sodium sulphate also moves to market mainly in rail hopper cars. When a shipper has no effective alternative means of shipping his product, as I have indicated is the case with regard to potash, sodium sulphate and other products, he becomes a captive shipper. The minister is aware of the arguments which were advanced on the definition of a captive shipper during the committee's hearings. As other hon. members have pointed out, Bill C-231 is supposed to protect the captive shipper from expensive transportation rates. For the economic welfare and in the interest of all the areas in our country—again I am speaking for Saskatchewan in particular—we must make absolutely certain that this protection is provided.

I will have more to say regarding the maximum rate formula for captive shippers as set out in new section 336, clause 53 of the bill, when that clause comes up for consideration. All I wish to say now is that the proposed formula of variable cost for a 30,000 pound car plus 150 per cent would produce a rate which would be three or four times greater than the present rate. I am mentioning this to indicate that the bill provides very little protection to captive shippers such as I have mentioned. In spite of the consideration which we may give to the minister's plea for fast passage of the bill we must ensure that every clause in the bill meets the needs of all parts of Canada.

The minister will be familiar with the following point which I wish to bring to his attention because I referred to it several times in the transport committee. I am referring to the proposed removal of the \$7 million a year bridge subsidy for the long haul north of lake Superior in northern Ontario. The proposed