

Transportation

later in the corridor. We shared a few jocular remarks about this. This shows the danger of treading in a swamp full of railway legislation involving dozens of acts which must be dealt with.

My argument really is not altered by the fact that the section exists which I assumed was not going to exist. The section provides that the national system—the C.N.R.—among other things will procure or direct shipments of goods through Canadian seaports if the shipper does not specify otherwise. I recall the word “procure”, because I think the meaning of this would be that if there were any interchange between the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Canadian National Railways by virtue of this section would have to request the Canadian Pacific Railway to use a Canadian seaport. I do not know whether or not this is done in practice or whether it is impractical. Nevertheless there seems to be a direction to use seaports. It would be very easy for the railway when quoting rates to the shipper to say that by using such and such a port—Portland, Baltimore or the like—that the rate will be one thing and that by using Halifax, Saint John, Quebec or Montreal the rate will be another.

Beyond the matter of choice, there is no requirement for the development of Canadian ports. I think this is an important point and one which should be considered, because the railway will quote the route by which it can carry goods for the maximum return with the least amount of effort. Under the best possible practice I think the railways would be bound to direct its customers to the routes best suited to their purses. I wish I had known that section 14(2) carried on the law, because it would not have hurt my argument one single bit. I would have argued even more strenuously that whatever protection we have under the law is very small protection indeed.

I should like to emphasize this point to the minister. I give him full marks for his knowledge concerning section 14(2) or for the homework on the part of the people in the gallery. This is all part of the good clean fun of debate and it serves me right. I do not wish, however, to leave the point that the study which is now before the minister dealing with maritime transportation needs should deal with the point of development of the ports. If it does not, then those who carried out the study should be sent back to the grindstone, with their noses up against it.

I believe the minister agrees with me. From his nod and smile I gather that they have dealt with this point. This is vital and perhaps even it could be added to the Prime Minister's interminable and endless bottomed sack of wonders that he unveiled for us earlier this afternoon, because this is a matter of life or death to the ports of Saint John and Halifax, and is very vital to the whole maritime economy.

• (5:50 p.m.)

It is specifically set forth in clause 1 that the public interest would have to be considered. The minister has made two alterations by amendment in this regard since this matter came back to the house, in a specific attempt to meet the needs of the maritimes. I think he should be thanked in that regard, because he was dealing with shipments through or maximum use of Canadian seaports.

Perhaps at hearings in respect of public interest these changes to Bill No. C-231 will be considered by the board. I hope the board will take a look at the over-all legislation and find that these matters have not been mentioned in previous enactments, and then come to the conclusion that this does relate to public interest.

I am a little concerned, and I know the minister will be sympathetic in this regard, that at these hearings the commission will give consideration to what took place before the passage of Bill No. C-231, and come to the conclusion that public interest is not really affected because shippers are following traditional methods of moving goods out of this country and into other countries. Perhaps I am wrong in that regard. It may be that the board after reading clause 1 of Bill No. C-231 will be generous in its interpretation of what is in the public interest of Canada in order that more use can be made of all our seaports.

Since this is a short day and the minister and his staff have reached the final stages or are on the last lap of this bill, which I presume will wind up tomorrow—

Mr. Knowles: The minister has reached the final stages of what?

Mr. McCleave: Of this particular bill.

Mr. Pickersgill: Perhaps “collapse” would be more appropriate.

Mr. McCleave: I know the hon. member for Acadia plans to go west over the week end, so at least our consideration should not go beyond Friday.