

Narcotic Drug Act

Mr. McKENZIE (Lambton-Kent): I was not in the house when the minister introduced this bill. I have no desire to reopen the discussion, because the less publicity given this question, the better. I may be entirely out of order, but since it has been brought in I have received communications from certain persons in Lambton county who for over twenty-four years have been growing what is called Indian hemp for commercial purposes. They entered into this project encouraged by the Department of Agriculture and sponsored by them, and have made quite a profitable enterprise out of it during the past several years.

As I read the amendment it is possible to obtain a licence to grow this hemp under certain conditions. That may be all right, but if the restrictions are so great as to make it impracticable to grow this hemp, then I suggest that no licences should be granted at all. If you will look at the Canadian Almanac at page 102, in connection with the tariff, you will notice that hemp seed is listed for free importation. That would lead me to believe that it is possible to import seed and to grow it commercially. I fully realize that if this bill is passed it will be more difficult to control the growing of what is known as marihuana in small plots in back yards, or in flower pots, than it will be to control it in a commercial way.

One grower I have in mind is probably the only man in Canada who has converted hemp into a spinnable fibre for export, and he has built up a profitable sideline. In all fairness, if the restrictions are to be made too severe in the granting of licences, then the privilege should be abolished and this grower should be compensated for the money he has spent on machinery, and for the profitable industry he has built up. I bring this to the attention of the minister because in the twenty-four years that this man has grown this hemp there has been no complaint from the narcotics branch nor from any other source whatever, if there are to be too rigid restrictions he or any other grower should be compensated to the extent I suggest.

Section agreed to.

Bill as amended reported.

TRANSPORT COMMISSION

AUTHORITY TO CONTROL TRANSPORT OF PASSENGERS
AND GOODS BY RAILWAYS, SHIPS
AND AIRCRAFT

Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Transport) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following proposed resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure conferring authority upon a transport commis-
[Mr. Power.]

sion (the board of railway commissioners to be known as such) to license, regulate and control the transport of passengers and goods by railways, ships and aircraft, and to fix licence fees and transportation tolls and charges and regulate and control other matters incidental thereto.

Motion agreed to, and the house went into committee, Mr. Johnston (Lake Centre) in the chair.

Mr. HOWE: The purpose of the bill to be founded upon this resolution is to extend the jurisdiction of the board of railway commissioners, which in future, if this bill carries, will be known as the Board of Transport Commissioners, to inland shipping and transportation by air. A bill similar to this was introduced last session in another chamber, and a long series of hearings was held there. In drafting the present bill we have profited by the discussion in the other chamber and eliminated such of the more contentious features as are not essential to the purpose of the measure. We believe that this legislation will serve a constructive purpose, and that it will not be particularly contentious in its present form. The bill will have the effect of not only extending regulation to shipping and aviation, but will also have the effect of alleviating somewhat the possible over-regulation of the railways; for it extends to them the power to contract under certain circumstances, with full publicity and full protection against discrimination, giving them to a limited extent the power to contract which shipping and aviation now have.

Mr. BENNETT: I do not think the minister's explanation is an ample explanation of the general principle of the resolution. But possibly we can wait until the bill is brought down to secure the necessary information.

Mr. CHURCH: This is the second time within a week that the transportation question has been before this house. The other day a committee was appointed on the Canadian National Railways estimates. What that committee will do I do not know, because no questions can be asked in the house.

This second transportation bill was before another body last year and I notice that the minister is dropping one of the main features of regulation, that with respect to motor buses and trucks operating on the highways, which are to-day robbing the railways of their business and are in considerable measure responsible for the railway deficit. These deficits are accumulating. The railway commission is not a transport commission at all. In England they have a transport department headed by a transport minister, who has