

Transportation

as reflected in this house, one necessary step, it would seem to me, would be to place both these large companies under public ownership.

Mr. Pickersgill: Would the hon. gentleman permit a question? Does he think it would be desirable to have the trucking lines also owned by the government?

Mr. Prittie: Certainly not all the trucking lines. But I believe that if the government owned the two bigger systems together with the trucking lines which are now subsidiary to those systems it would exercise effective control over all major aspects of interprovincial transport.

The minister himself said this was a tenable point of view but that the cabinet had rejected it. It would have been helpful if when dealing with a subject as important as this one—and the present bill is supposed to deal with our transportation future for many years to come—the hon. gentleman had given some reasons for the government's rejection of the case for placing the Canadian Pacific under public ownership.

This issue will have to be faced one day, and I hope that later the minister will have something to say about the question. At any rate there is a growing demand in the country for action such as I have proposed. I recall that when the representatives of the National Farmers Union were before the railway committee two years ago they made such a demand. The National Farmers Union, I understand, has a reputation of being the more radical of the two major agricultural groups of the country and perhaps its views in suggesting something of that sort would not carry the same weight as the views of some other organizations. But I notice that in its submission to the government this year the Canadian Federation of Agriculture made the same point.

● (6:00 p.m.)

I should like to quote from page 18 of the presentation to the Prime Minister of Canada and members of the cabinet by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture on February 22, 1966, under the heading "Transportation Policy":

It is the view of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture that the nationalization of the rail enterprises of Canadian Pacific Railways would make possible a single integrated system of rail service that could most rationally, and with the public interest always paramount, serve the people of Canada. It recommends therefore that the C.P.R. rail services in fact be nationalized.

[Mr. Prittie.]

This point had been made earlier by the National Farmers Union. The same point was made by a number of members of this house last spring when the question of the cancellation of the Dominion passenger service was under consideration and when there was some unhappiness in respect of the speed at which the railways were carrying grain to coastal ports. At that time I heard, from unexpected quarters, members suggest it was time the second railway company in this country was under government control. Again the government has said it has not changed its view. I think many Canadians would like to know what are the reasons for that refusal.

There is another point which I think members of the committee on transport and communications would like to ask a great many questions about. Where are the railways to get all the extra revenue as a result of this bill? When the emergency legislation was before us we were told that if this bill were passed the railways would not have to come to parliament to get the money to pay the extra wages which they may be compelled to pay their employees either by parliament or as a result of negotiation. I think the members of the committee should do a great deal of questioning on this point so that we will know where the extra revenue will come from. We know that the rates for the Atlantic provinces are not to change for the next few years, so there will be no extra revenue there. The Crowsnest pass rates are to remain for the next few years, so there will be no extra revenue there.

It has been suggested that the railways can save a certain amount of money by rail line abandonment. I listened very carefully to the speech of the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton) the other night and I listened to the answers which the minister gave him during his speech on the question of rail line abandonment or rationalization.

From the minister's statement at page 8034 of *Hansard* it seems that when we finish with the bill there will be very few rail line abandonments because the government is going to give an undertaking that large areas will be left alone. As a result of what the minister said I cannot see that there will be very many abandonments and therefore there will not be very much saving in that direction. Presumably extra revenue for the railways will come from those areas where there is competition in the transportation business and where the truck lines exist between major cities in areas such as southern Ontario, the St. Lawrence valley and certain