

The commission will also be responsible for the licensing and economic regulation of commodity pipe lines and motor vehicle transport as that becomes necessary in the public interest. The honourable sponsor of the bill assured us yesterday that in the event of any difficulty arising with provincial governments there will be consultation, and that any such difficulty will be resolved by mutual consent.

The commission will consist of 17 members and will be divided into five subcommittees dealing with, as we were told, the different branches of transportation.

Some of the main provisions of the bill that were emphasized were those in connection with branch lines. I have been long of the opinion that the railways should not be compelled to maintain branch lines that were not paying unless they were absolutely necessary to the economy of the country, and were the only means of transportation in their particular sections. I am glad to see that there is provision made for the elimination of branch lines which may not be needed, and which have been a burden for many years on the railways and on the economy of the country.

This measure deals mostly with freight rates in general. The idea is that there must be competition between all the different branches of transportation, but that the competition must be adjusted and controlled so that it will be fair to all.

Generally speaking, competition would be very easy to control if all parts of Canada were in the same position. But, they are not. Different areas have different problems, as was discovered when the horizontal freight rates were established. The competition between the trucks and the railways in the central part of Canada meant that the freight rates there were reduced. In eastern and western Canada where there was not this competition the freight rates were higher and thus a burden was placed on the people in those areas—a burden which was not commensurate with the charges being made in the central parts of the country.

Then there is the matter of water transportation. In this connection I, as one who comes from the Maritimes, point out that we have been very much concerned over water transportation and the ice-breaking activities on the St. Lawrence River, keeping it open during the winter months. That results in a serious situation for the winter ports of Canada, such as Saint John and Halifax. In 1960, from January to March, only six ships sailed up the St. Lawrence to the City of Montreal. The

number has increased in the winter months over the past few years. I am told that today there is an expectation that over 200 ships will be diverted from the ports of Halifax and Saint John and will be moving up the St. Lawrence River.

The Minister of Transport has assured us that there will be no special effort made to keep the St. Lawrence River open. Of course whatever effort is made will be at the expense of the people in general. In any event, the river is being kept open. The harbours of Quebec, Montreal and Trois Rivières are being kept open, and they are also getting assistance from the many ships which are coming in from other parts of the world. Russian ships in particular come in with their heavy steel hulls, and they assist in keeping the river open.

Perhaps we of the Maritimes will have to recognize that much as our ports of Saint John and Halifax will suffer, we shall have to reconcile ourselves to a situation which seems bound to happen. However, it is a sad sight at Saint John or Halifax to see perhaps only one or two ships in the harbour where once were many, loading and unloading, and also to know that the means of livelihood of thousands of men who depended on the winter ports for employment to maintain themselves and their families has been affected.

I think it bears repeating that the economy of the Atlantic provinces is extremely dependent on the railroads.

Honourable senators, I hope I may be excused for mentioning my own particular part of Canada in trying to review this bill.

**Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West):** Everybody else does.

**Hon. Mr. Brooks:** I am sure they do. The debate on the Crownsnest Pass will illustrate that; it was a highly successful debate. I find that it is utterly impossible for anyone to try to analyze this bill and to speak for every part of this country, even though qualified to do so, which I am not.

We in the Atlantic provinces have been sufferers, along with the railways. I think the railways may be said to be victims of circumstances very much the same as are the provinces, politically, economically and, if you like, historically. It has been our mutual misfortune that attempted solutions of our separate problems have almost always been, in part at least, at the expense of one another, and mostly at the expense of the Atlantic provinces.