

However, appearing before it will be representatives of the railway companies, who are strong and powerful. The Government would be doing the country a service if it provided a bureau from which legal personnel would be available with the services of railway economists, to go before that commission to make sure that the producers' case would be well represented. The farmers do not stand a chance by themselves before a commission, where they will be arguing against legal counsel, economists and rail costing experts representing railway companies.

This morning I read an important statement in the press by the Honourable John Turner, Minister without Portfolio, wherein he advocated a system to provide public moneys for legal aid to people who are unable to provide legal assistance for themselves when they get into difficulties. That is a good principle, and I compliment the Honourable Mr. Turner on his statement. It is my opinion that that principle should be extended in a situation like this, to provide legal services to producers along the railway lines, who may not be adequately represented before the new commission.

Care must be taken that the abandonment procedures are not carried out in cases where, a few years later, everyone would agree a mistake has been made.

The agricultural industry in Western Canada is efficient, as Senator McDonald so well said. It has increased its productivity in the last few years by 50 per cent. The agronomists of this country are using every effort on an accelerated basis to increase the grain yields.

As one who understands something of this field, I would expect to see a great breakthrough in grain production in the next few years, showing at least a 25 per cent increase, and therefore there would be at least that much greater business for the railway companies.

I am sure this bill has received careful consideration and thought before being brought before us. Many amendments have been made to the first draft and the Government has been prepared to accept the amendments. I feel that further changes will be made, and I have made my comments this afternoon in the hope that when this case is argued, the same weight and consideration may be given to the farmers as is being given to the railway position.

Hon. G. Percival Burchill: Honourable senators, at this hour of the day I can assure

you my remarks will be brief. In case anyone should leave this chamber this afternoon under the impression that all the transportation problems are in Western Canada, I join with my colleagues from the Maritimes, my old friends Senator Brooks and Senator Phillips, in emphasizing that we in eastern Canada have some problems regarding transportation.

Before I say more about that, may I say I was glad to hear the gracious and deserving tribute paid this afternoon to the Honourable Mr. MacPherson, the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Transportation which brought in the report on which this legislation is based. I wish to remind honourable senators that Mr. MacPherson came from the Maritime Provinces. He was our gift to Western Canada. Mr. MacPherson was not alone in that respect: we have sent thousands out there since Confederation, and we will send many more, because the Maritimes are producing the same kind of men all the time. Therefore, do not forget where the good stuff comes from, when talking about the glories and the progress made in western Canada.

I join with my Maritime friends in respect to the problems of transportation in eastern Canada. These are vital problems for us. To go back to the days of Confederation, one of the provisions which brought the Maritime provinces into Confederation was that a railroad be built to enable manufacturers in the Maritime provinces to market their goods in central Canada. So the Intercolonial Railway was built, and for some years while that company had its main office in Moncton we enjoyed fairly good times. But the Intercolonial Railway was assimilated into the great Canadian National, with headquarters in metropolitan Montreal. We in the Maritimes felt that that agreement was sacred, as our forefathers also thought it was sacred when the Maritimes joined Confederation.

We have an idea now and have had for some years that the agreement is not regarded by the management of the Canadian National Railways in the same way as it was at the time when it was formulated in the days of Confederation, with the result that ever since that time transportation has been a burning question all over the Maritime provinces. In fact it got to such a point, I think in 1926, that a special train carrying people from all over the Maritimes—among them the most prominent citizens—came here to Ottawa to protest to the Government. They demanded that something be done, because in those days, and previous to that time, we