

Transportation

Mr. Mauro of Manitoba, Mr. Frawley of Alberta and Mr. Dickson for the maritimes made their fears very clear. Professors Williams and Borts re-emphasized these fears. If you wonder where Saskatchewan stands, I can only point out that their brief, as presented to the transport committee, was an innocuous compendium which indicated that the Liberals in Saskatchewan hesitated to tread on Liberal toes in Ottawa. Quite a different attitude was taken by the official opposition in Saskatchewan and by Saskatchewan members of parliament in Ottawa who do not like this bill and do not share the views of the Liberal government in Saskatchewan.

The clause which provided for a study of the Crowsnest pass rates, which was to be made within three years, of course has been eliminated. However, we are faced with a new clause 74 which brings in through the back door what went out through the front door. Since we have not had the ruling of Mr. Speaker on this amendment, I feel I should not comment on it further. It is odd, however, that in the years when the railroads move large volumes of grain their profit picture is better than in the years when the movement is lower. Since the railroads claim that they lose money on moving grain, one would logically suppose that the more grain they move the larger their losses would be. If the minister is so certain that there is adequate competition now in transportation in our country, why is it necessary to make this notable exception in his policy of freeing the railroads to set their own rates? It is very strange indeed, although perhaps not quite so strange when we realize the attitude of the west toward these Crowsnest pass rates.

The bill sets up, in part I, a transport commission which is to carry out the intent of the bill and regulate the various modes of transport to which the bill refers. To do so, the commission is given very broad powers. These powers are so broad that parliament will have very little if any control, except through the annual report the commission will make. While it may be that the commission will discharge its duties properly and well, there is a possibility that it will not.

If the appointments to the commission are good and the minister exercises firm control, this scheme may work well. However, if the appointments are not good, parliament and the country will be in for trouble. If the appointments are good, even a good board may be perverted through time. It may have some strong personalities who—and this is a

[Mr. Cantelon.]

common fault—believe that they know more about what policies should be followed than either the minister or parliament. With an uninformed or weak minister,—and perhaps ten years from now the present minister will be gone,—no one can tell what mistakes may be made. I consider the present transport committee in parliament will be quite incapable of fully evaluating the action this large transport commission may take. It has neither the staff nor the expertise to be able to evaluate the actions of the transport commission. Some steps must be taken to control this many-headed monster or parliament or the country may regret it.

However, this minister and his party have refused our suggestions and I suppose we will have to live with the control of the commission. Provision is made in the bill for attention to be given to research. I think this is something we have needed for a long time, particularly in respect of rail lines. There is no doubt the railways have been content to slog along in the same old way, on the same old track and, I might say, in the same old cars. I suggest to the minister that he set up a chair of transportation in one of the universities. We would then develop some Dr. Williams and Dr. Borts of our own, men who thoroughly understand the operations of transport.

Mr. Pickersgill: I wonder if I could ask the hon. gentleman a question?

Mr. Cantelon: Yes.

Mr. Pickersgill: Was he not just as much impressed by Dr. Armstrong of McGill as with either of these gentlemen who came from another country?

Mr. Cantelon: I was indeed, and I probably should have mentioned his name. However, I think we have too few of these experts. I would hope that the action I suggested would enable us to have many more experts in the field of transport. What I was trying to point out more specifically was that if we had a chair of transportation there would be direct research and a direct developmental policy that would be to the advantage of the whole country. Is such a chair were set up, it should be given adequate money so that it might carry out research into all phases of transport, not the least of which might be the economics of rate setting.

I am compelled to this interest in transportation research because of the feeling I have that we are rapidly falling behind in the way