

Transportation

was 8 per cent and that the increase over the two years ends up at 18 per cent; and is it not true, therefore, that the problem of meeting the wage bill in 1967 is a much bigger problem than it is in 1966; and therefore it becomes much more urgent in 1967 that anything this parliament can do should be done to put the railways in a better position to pay that wage bill themselves, and that it is desirable to do so?

Mr. Dinsdale: Certainly I agree with that statement. This is a subject that will be touched upon more effectively and appropriately when we come to the next matter before the house, which I presume will be in the hands of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp), when we endeavour to enlighten ourselves and reach some consensus as to what might be done about the process of galloping inflation, which is at the root of a great many of the difficulties of not only the railways and railroad employees but most of the economic groups in Canada. The point I should like to deal with has been discussed by other members of the house. I am only the second member from Manitoba to take part in this debate, and I am sure—

Mr. Pickersgill: There have been three this evening.

Mr. Dinsdale:—that my hon. friend from Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) would have dealt with this problem had he not run out of time.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member would like to make that statement a little more accurate. The hon. member for Springfield (Mr. Schreyer) is also a member from Manitoba, and he spoke this evening.

Mr. Dinsdale: I was not in the house when the hon. member for Springfield made his remarks. I am sure he represented well the viewpoint of Manitoba and I am very pleased to hear that he has taken part in the debate. The problem that concerns me is the emphasis on national policy that predominates throughout the 68 pages of the legislation before us. It seems to me that there is a failure to pay sufficient attention to the regional problems, which are actually the basic difficulties in the field of transportation. It is all well and good to emphasize national policy but I think the minister himself is on record as having quoted that old expression that Canada is a difficult nation to govern,

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

largely because of the problems of regionalism, and any economic approach must take into consideration the specialized difficulties of the various regions of Canada. This has been the cause of some of our greatest economic and political upheavals in the past, and it is not necessary to retrace Canadian history in this regard. The minister himself is a native Manitoban—

Mr. Pickersgill: No; I was born in Ontario.

Mr. Dinsdale: Well, he is an adopted son of Manitoba, shall we say, and was a lecturer in that province at one of our universities during a period when the west was involved in rather distressing economic circumstances, largely because of the failure of the national government to take into consideration the particular difficulties of the western part of the country.

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. gentleman will recall that during most of that time there was a government of his party in office in this country.

Mr. Dinsdale: I am thinking particularly of the 1920's.

Mr. Pickersgill: It was in the 1930's that I was a teacher.

Mr. Dinsdale: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister was a student during the 1920's. During the early part of the 1930's, of course, Canada was rocked by a depression that was not only felt in this nation but throughout the western world. My emphasis since coming to this house some 15 years ago has been on the need to recognize the primary necessity for diversification and decentralization of industry across the nation. I would suggest to the minister and the government that great strides have been made in this direction during the past decade.

I want to bring to the minister's attention, because this is the only manner in which we will have the opportunity to bring it to the attention of the ministry, that in my humble opinion the emphasis in this bill militates against the progress of decentralization and diversification that has moved forward in a rather encouraging way in the past decade.

During the briefing session the other day I was concerned with discovering whether there had been preliminary consultation with the provincial governments before bringing down this legislation. On that point I was