

Transportation

segments of industry, including heavy industry, manufacturing, agriculture and trucking, not to mention the chambers of commerce and municipalities in the area which I represent, will wish to have the opportunity of placing their views before such a committee.

They would like to explain why the treatment to which they have been subject in the field of transportation has worked such undue hardship. These are the people who are likely to be asked, when there is any increase in the rates, to bear the economic burden and certainly they have a right to place before the committee any aspect of their understanding of the effect of this measure.

Mr. Pickersgill: May I ask another question? Is the hon. gentleman not aware that it is the intention to give all interested parties the fullest opportunity to be heard before the committee when the bill is sent there?

Mr. Danforth: I wish to thank the minister for that statement, and I am certain he is sincere when he gives me that assurance. However, I cannot help remembering other occasions when delegations found the greatest difficulty in making their wishes known before committees set up by this government.

In the light of that assurance from the minister I will certainly convey to interested parties in my own area the understanding that an opportunity will be afforded them to make presentations before the standing committee, and I am sure they will avail themselves of this opportunity.

As I have said, this is complicated legislation, legislation which must deal with the needs of the nation as a whole. It is to be hoped that, when the bill finally passes, the citizens of Ontario and Quebec will be satisfied that they are not bearing more than their fair share of the cost of the development of a policy which will place Canadian transportation on an economic basis of operation.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax): I should like to say a few words to the house, more particularly perhaps to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) and to the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Turner) who is basking at the feet of the old master. I said that slowly, Mr. Speaker, so that I would not fall into the trap into which the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Cameron) fell the other day by saying the wrong word. Perhaps before leaving the

[Mr. Danforth.]

Minister without Portfolio, who is learning his lesson in excellent fashion for the warfare he faces in the days ahead with the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer), I should ask whether the Minister of Transport is also giving singing lessons.

When I first read the bill which is now before the house I was pleased with the provision dealing with the Maritime Freight Rates Act and term 32 of the terms of union of Newfoundland with Canada. Since then I have had some second thoughts because, really, we are dealing with two main transportation problems, not with one, and I would much prefer to have seen the whole national transportation policy spelled out, including those provisions dealing with Atlantic Canada rather than wait until some future time for special provisions dealing with Atlantic Canada to be written in.

This is the reason for my concern. As I say, there are two problems. There is the matter of effective and efficient transportation as related to manufacturing in Canada. Then there is the question of transportation as it affects our exports and imports.

In the second field, as a representative of Halifax I am bound to be concerned about the competitive position of my own area as compared with the competitive position of other areas, and I think the present bill may be defective in this regard inasmuch as it fails to come to grips with some of the problems of real concern to the area I represent.

• (8:40 p.m.)

There are certain developments in the field of winter works, for example on the St. Lawrence river, with which this bill cannot deal and yet which are vital in consideration of a national transportation policy. These developments are with us now. These specifically are the decisions of two conferences, the Canada-United Kingdom freight conference and the United Kingdom-Canada freight conference. They sound like tweedledum and tweedledee, but they are perhaps two sides of the same coin which are pressing for all-out winter navigation on the St. Lawrence river. Unless some measure is brought in to check this, the ports of Halifax and Saint John will be a matter of serious economic consequence to the Atlantic area. By the time these transportation studies are brought in the damage may become permanent. So, while I welcome the thought of the minister turning toward a national transportation policy—and I think he will recall that