

Supply—Transport

to the problem might be for the Canadian Pacific Railway to make refunds to those who have to cross from Vancouver island to the mainland in the same way that it makes refunds to those who have to cross the state of Maine.

It seems to me what is needed is not a situation where certain hon. members get cash refunds from the Canadian Pacific Railway, but rather a law of this parliament providing that any necessary transportation is a matter of right. I am not suggesting that the law needs to be amended so that any hon. member of parliament can travel on any steamship at any time; but it does seem to me that the law could quite easily be amended to provide steamship transportation as of right wherever that transportation is necessary to make a continuous trip from one part of Canada to another.

This is a matter which has interested me somewhat because of a story well known to many of us in Winnipeg. The first labour member ever to come to the parliament of Canada was Mr. Arthur Puttee, who was elected as the member for Winnipeg in 1900, fifty-one years ago. Mr. Puttee is today well on in years, but he is in good health and still lives in the city of Winnipeg.

At that time members of parliament for the most part made their trips to Ottawa by virtue of passes given to them by the various railways. The gifts of the railways in those days, so we are told, were quite generous in many cases, and hon. members felt they were under obligation to them. When Mr. Arthur Puttee was elected to come to Ottawa, though he was a workman and it was not easy for him to find the money, he paid his own way, and sat up all the way. He was determined not to be under any obligation to the railway companies. It was not long before other hon. members felt the same way, and the law was amended so as to give transportation as of right, so that no hon. member was under any obligation to a railway company.

I think the situation that now obtains whereby the Canadian Pacific Railway makes refunds to those who cross the state of Maine should be changed, and that travel should be as of right. I would say the same should be the case for those who have to take a steamship at any place so as to make a continuous trip from one part of Canada to another.

Mr. Chevrier: That transportation could not by any stretch of the imagination be as of right, because it is in another country. This parliament has no authority to pass laws affecting other countries.

[Mr. Knowles.]

In so far as the first point raised by the hon. member, although I may be mistaken, I think perhaps the reason for the gratuitous transportation on railways is that parliament has always had jurisdiction over the railways, and provided the moneys voted originally for them. Not so, however, with the steamships, with the exception of steamships receiving subsidies. Many of the steamships which receive subsidies however would be of no use to hon. members. I believe that applies to the mail steamship operating between Vancouver and Victoria, which my hon. friend has in mind, and probably that is the one which would be used by the hon. member for Nanaimo. That perhaps is the reason why parliament, when it enacted legislation in the first instance, dealt with the railways alone, and not with steamships.

Mr. Coldwell: Do they not operate under charters granted by parliament?

Mr. Chevrier: Yes. Then, if one pursues it a step further, why not grant transportation on bus lines? After all, these are private corporations over which we certainly have no jurisdiction.

Mr. Coldwell: But we do not grant bus lines charters.

Mr. Chevrier: No, we do not; but sometimes bus lines are the property of railways. I was saying that bus lines often are operated by railways through subsidiary companies. I am just trying to be helpful in finding a reason why there has been a distinction as between railways and steamships.

Mr. Sinclair: And as between members of parliament.

Mr. Chevrier: Well, unfortunately, that is the case. I do not think it will apply to many members of parliament.

Mr. Gibson: About twenty of them.

Mr. Chevrier: As I have said, I am asking the maritime commission to give it their consideration.

Mr. Gibson: Just so that the record may be complete, I think the hon. member for Yukon-Mackenzie River is perhaps under a greater disability than any other member in the house, in having to go from Skagway to Vancouver. I think that is particularly unfair and places an undue burden upon him.

Mr. Fulton: When the minister is looking into this matter, perhaps he might look into the related matter of the status of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway. Passes with which members are furnished say that they are entitled to free transportation, with baggage, upon all railway trains in Canada. I