

Transportation

a real burden on the people who must use railway transportation or, on the other hand, the railways will price themselves out of the market when they are free to increase rates. Perhaps they might even do so deliberately if they see that the present restrictions are too onerous on them. I believe that if we are to provide an efficient and economic system of transportation we cannot get away from our system of subsidies. I think it was the hon. member for Saint John-Albert who said something to this effect—why are we so afraid of subsidies. I think the use of subsidies is perhaps one of the fairest ways to allocate the cost of railway transportation in a country such as ours. Perhaps this is not the case in a country which is as heavily populated as the United States, for example, but I believe it is certainly the case in a country such as ours where many areas are sparsely populated.

I do not think we should place the burden on some small areas. I think this would be the result were we to remove the regulations in respect of railway transportation, and I am afraid this is what will happen when Bill C-231 comes into effect. I am not too critical of the bill because, in the first place, I do not think I have any right to be critical of it. I sat through all the committee meetings, as did numerous other members. We certainly tried our best to come up with something which would be of some benefit to the people as a whole. Sometimes, however, as was the case after we had gone through the bill very thoroughly, one keeps mulling things over in one's mind. I am still wondering what Bill C-231 is going to accomplish.

I come from an area in respect of which the latitude to be given to the railways will have a detrimental effect. We all think in terms of the areas from which we come. I think it is perhaps good that we do this. I come from an area where great amounts of pulp chips, lumber and timber supplies of all types are being shipped constantly. I am afraid that the latitude which the railways are to have may have a very detrimental effect on this area. This is an area where I think the railways will be given an opportunity to move fairly freely when it comes to increasing rates. I do not intend to go into the implications of clause 314D because the hon. member for Medicine Hat and my colleague the hon. member for Springfield dealt with it thoroughly. Let me point out that one of the real weaknesses of this bill is to be found in this clause and I hope that when we reach discussion of

it we will devise something much better than it now contains.

● (7:10 p.m.)

Even though we were told by representatives of the C.N.R. and the C.P.R. that they could not think of anyone who could be considered a captive shipper at this time, the hon. member for Medicine Hat made it clear that a person who is now paying a class rate can in many instances be considered a captive shipper if we follow the definition of a captive shipper as outlined in Bill No. C-231. Many of these people have to pay a higher rate than a competitor who is better able to negotiate with the company.

I do not intend to take up very much more time but I should like to give notice now that I intend to move an amendment having to do with abandonment of branch lines and dislocation of employees. The proposal embodied in my amendment is one which was recommended some time ago and can in fact be found in the proceedings and evidence of December, 1963, of the standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines. Nothing in this bill even touches upon the difficulty I have in mind and I hope consideration will be given to my amendment which I intend to propose at the appropriate time.

Mr. Pascoe: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Peace River very carefully referred to the inherent dangers of Bill No. C-231, and I hope the minister will pay careful attention to his suggestions regarding the preservation of the rights of parliament and the responsibilities of this committee.

The hon. member for Acadia was very forceful in his remarks and I do not intend to repeat his arguments. The hon. member for Saint John-Albert spoke just as concisely about the difficulties in the maritime areas.

As a representative of a developing area in southern Saskatchewan I intend to consider this bill from a prairie point of view. I realize, however, that each one of us must have a national as well as a regional outlook. My first concern is that the bill in part is based on conditions which do not exist at this time. The Minister of Transport has emphasized the fact that government transportation policy has been influenced by the MacPherson commission report. This commission conducted an exhaustive inquiry into railway problems and made a very complete and comprehensive report, but let me draw to the attention of the committee that it was set up in 1958. Its recommendations related to railway problems

[Mr. Fawcett.]