

Transport Commission of Inquiry

from Waterloo to Waterloo-Cambridge. This will indicate that I do not make these remarks in a partisan way.

Having to move bills in private members' hour is a deplorable way of having to change the names of constituencies. This results in taking time from the private members hour. It appears this time the matter will be handled quickly. The last time we dealt with such a motion, it took much longer.

Members must use private members hour to change the names of their constituencies when we should be dealing with bills such as those of the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) and the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) which are changes in substance related to the needs of this country. Although the hon. member for Peel South (Mr. Blenkarn) has a legitimate reason for changing the name of his constituency, it is ridiculous that members must use the time allotted for private members hour for this purpose.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I think there would be agreement to take the bill through all stages, including committee of the whole and third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Does the House give consent to allow the change to be made to the motion so that it may be referred to a committee of the whole?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee, reported, read the third time and passed.

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FEDERAL TRANSPORT COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ACT

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH COMMISSION

On the order:

January 15, 1973—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications of Bill C-33, An Act to provide for the constitution of a Federal Transport Commission of Inquiry (impartial investigation of transport accidents)—Mr. Forrestall.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Some hon. members, including the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall), know the Chair has some reservation about the acceptability of this bill. At first glance, it is the impression of the Chair that this bill seems to infringe upon the financial initiative of the Crown. I do not wish to prevent hon. members making points in defence of the acceptability of this bill. I invite hon. members to assist the Chair in its decision.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, without calling into question the very real problems which cause the Chair to have some reservation about this and other bills that come before this parliament, may I be permitted to make the observation that this bill, like a number of others, has been on the order paper for this and the two previous parliaments.

In most cases where the matter is dealt with, the urgency of proposing bills which attempt to infringe is, from the private member's point of view, clear. Impairment of the

[Mr. Knight.]

initiative of the treasury benches to raise and dispense public funds is not really an issue in this bill. Indeed, the substantive matter of the bill in terms of the ability of the government to raise and expend funds is not involved. In fact, there is no additional expenditure apart from the salaries of the five-man commission.

I find it very difficult to argue the merits of that particular part of the bill. However, I would argue that in recent years conflicts have arisen in the area of general transportation in Canada, particularly aviation, seaborne traffic, transcontinental trains and interprovincial trucking. In recent years, there have been conflicts in a very real sense in interprovincial pipeline transportation. The bill is directed to this concern rather than any initiative of the government with regard to raising money. That is the argument I intend to make in the next few minutes rather than try to argue the merits of a particular clause which, I must confess, I would find difficult to argue with the Chair. If the Chair wishes to entertain other comments on this point, I would be prepared to accede to other hon. members for that purpose.

Following that, I would like to suggest to Your Honour the degree of concern I have with regard to all forms of transportation in Canada. Rather than take liberty with the initiatives of the treasury benches, I would like to bring before this chamber and the country the concern I have in relation to what I consider to be a very urgent matter.

● (1710)

The bill flows from a concern that a conflict of interest could arise when an investigative body is charged in a statutory way with the responsibility for investigating accidents in the transportation field in respect of which it has some regulatory authority. It is this concern I offer as an argument in favour of allowing this brief debate this afternoon. There are other arguments one could use for or against the suggestion that the provisions of this bill might impair the right, prerogative or the ability of the treasury benches to raise money. I can only plead once again that we should be given the opportunity to discuss this matter without getting into the question of the salaries of those on the commission. A failure to accept the very general argument would preclude in a very serious way members of this Chamber from dealing with matters of urgency and great concern.

Your Honour is quite familiar with the citations in Beauchesne's which refer to the right of all of us to be heard. When that right is precluded by any technical argument, I find it difficult to argue in a general way, because that is a fatal argument which does not in my opinion relate to the substantive situation with which we are now faced. The urgency of this matter is very clear in a statistical way. The increase in the number of accidents in this country is creating an international concern which Canada is not presenting to the international transportation community, yet there is a positive indication that accidents in this country could be investigated without any threat of a conflict of interest.

From time to time governments are not prepared to recognize that ministries are fallible, or in fact that they do make errors. They often do not recognize the important