

Transportation

does the resolution say? I should like to read part of it:

To provide for new methods of fixing freight rates and for the rationalization of branch lines of railway and passenger train services; to authorize the payment from the consolidated revenue fund by way of assistance to permit of orderly adjustment to the new freight rate structures and the removal of other forms of assistance to railways; to authorize the payment of assistance from the consolidated revenue fund to railway companies where they are required to maintain uneconomic branch lines or passenger train services in operation for the public good;

We are going through this bill clause by clause. We have been discussing this very detailed bill at great length. Time and again hon. members on both sides of the house have made suggestions and offered amendments, the purpose of which is simply to ensure that where the railway companies have to do something which may not be economically feasible the people of Canada will make up the losses. I suggest that in the year 1967 it is poor policy to bring in a bill to protect the Railways against all losses they may have to incur in carrying out the transportation policy of this country. However, to say at the same time to workers who will be affected by rationalization, workers who as a result of the abandonment of branch lines will have to move to another town with their families, that their rights are second class compared with the rights of the railway company is an injustice. Yet essentially, Mr. Chairman, that is what the minister is saying.

● (4:00 p.m.)

The scope of this amendment makes clear that we are dealing with rationalization, which I suggest to the minister will mean dislocation of the lives of the railway workers. I do not know whether they will be few in number, as suggested by the hon. member for Saint John-Albert, or many, as suggested by the hon. member for Nickel Belt. Indeed, I do not think that consideration is important. The important principle involved here is that railway workers should not be required to carry the whole burden of this kind of dislocation and drastic change.

Let us think about the events which led to the appointment of Mr. Justice Freedman as a commissioner. The C.N.R. decided to extend the runs of certain of their employees and as a result of this thinking workers at Nakina would have had to move because it would no longer be a turn-around point. As a result of their fears, and despite the assurances given at the time to the then minister of transport by the president of the C.N.R. that nothing

serious would eventuate, there was a work stoppage which tied up the C.N.R. virtually from one end of Canada to the other. That is how important the workers of the C.N.R. believed this issue to be.

In the result, Mr. Justice Freedman was appointed by this government to inquire into the matter. He made a report which was supported by all parties in the house. What Mr. Justice Freedman said essentially—I will not go into the details of his report or quote it—was that the railway workers have a right to protection when drastic changes are decided upon by the railway.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the hon. gentleman is speaking to the point of order. Perhaps it would be more orderly if we were to decide whether the amendment is in order. If it is not in order, then it appears to me to be not debatable. We should not take up the time of the committee if it is not in order. If it is in order then the hon. gentleman's remarks will be thoroughly relevant.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Chairman, on the point of order I can only repeat what I said a few moments ago. This bill deals with the whole question of rationalization and of compensating the railways where the abandonment of branch lines leads to losses by the railways. In cases where the railways are required to continue services which lose money the government can also compensate the railways. Therefore it seems obvious to me that not only do we have the right to deal with the effects of this kind of rationalization and the changes which will be brought about for the workers by any drastic revisions made by the railways but that this is the correct time to discuss the matter. I suggest that the amendment is in order and should be considered now.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Chairman, I rise to urge you to accept the amendment. Without repeating some of the arguments which have been made I should like to remind you, if I may, as an example of the scope of the bill, that the other day the hon. member for Port Arthur, with the support of the minister who told us he had taken an active part in designing the amendment, moved an amendment which has since been adopted by this committee and is now clause 20 of the bill.

There is not a word in this amendment which specifically refers to the matter with which that amendment dealt. You recall, Mr.