

*Transportation*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret):** I understand there has been an agreement that the house will suspend the sitting between seven and eight o'clock. Is this agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret):** Is there agreement to resumption of the business interrupted a few moments ago?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**TRANSPORTATION****PROVISION FOR DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL POLICY**

The house resumed consideration in committee of Bill No. C-231 to define and implement a national transportation policy for Canada, to amend the Railway Act and other acts in consequence thereof and to enact other consequential provisions—Mr. Pickersgill—Mr. Rinfret in the chair.

On clause 50—Crowsnest pass rates.

**The Chairman:** Pursuant to an order just passed, I do now leave the chair.

SITTING SUSPENDED

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SITTING RESUMED

The committee resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. Sherman:** Mr. Chairman, when the committee recessed an hour ago I was in the process of outlining the anxieties of western Canada, and certain members of this committee as well as the standing committee on transportation, relating to the subject of railway costs. I was referring to proposed section 329(1) which contains provisions relating to the revenues and costs with respect to the railways' grain carrying operations, and the information that would be studied by the commission during the review proposed in this legislation. The minister made the point that there should be no cause for concern about the question of costs in this context because the information would be requested by the treasury, and certainly there would be no opportunity for any pertinent data to be withheld. This is encouraging assurance from the minister, and I accept it in good grace.

However, I emphasize what I said before the dinner recess, that a good many of us will have to be shown that this precise costing information that we feel is absolutely essential to the work of the commission will, in

[The Deputy Chairman.]

fact, be available. As I suggested, sir, we have experienced considerable frustration going down that path. The hon. member for Rosthern, in an eloquent dissertation in this house yesterday on this subject made this point, and I quote from his remarks as recorded on page 11866 of *Hansard*:

When we take a look at the cost accounting which was part of the various submissions from the railways in the years gone by, the failure on their part to substantiate their claims that they have incurred losses in the movement of grain under the Crowsnest pass rates, and the failure of this bill to provide what I believe to be the necessary machinery for parliament to study this matter effectively, we must come to the conclusion once again that this is an open door for the railways to make profits which will affect the welfare of western Canada.

I believe the remarks of the hon. member for Rosthern, which I have just quoted, effectively and eloquently crystallize one of the concerns of a great segment of the population of this country, and particularly that concern relating to proposed sections 328 and 329 and their effect on the Crowsnest pass agreement. I have said that this proposed section 329, in my opinion, contains many serious flaws. I said the first and most obvious flaw was inconsistency. In my view a greater flaw is this rather unsubstantiated and unsupportable faith in the revenue and cost figures that are purportedly going to be made available to the commission for this proposed Crowsnest rates.

However, the greatest flaw in the proposed section 329 is the provision for a review within three years after the coming into force of this particular section. I submit, sir, that any attempt to carry out such a review no later than three years after the coming into force of this section will militate against the welfare of the agricultural industry and, in fact, the entire fabric of the economy of western Canada. There may be some sympathy on this side of the house for a suggestion that such a review be held, but it should not be held less than ten years after this legislation comes into force.

This provision would give the country, the railroads and the commission time to adjust to the sweeping and revolutionary changes that are proposed in this legislation, to adjust to the changes in technology that are required and that are imminent in our transportation milieu in this country. It would be a far more realistic bracket in which to operate than would the period of three years or less. The way this proposed section is worded, the period of time could be substantially less than three years. The suggestion is that this review be held not later than three years after the