

*Transportation*

**An hon. Member:** Put it in the act.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Put what in the act?

**Mr. Forrestal:** An assurance as to what is to happen at the end of the two-year period. I will not go into it further at this time. I think the minister well knows what I am talking about.

● (7:20 p.m.)

The hon. gentleman is aware of the tremendous difficulty attaching to the shipment of goods from the maritimes to the western regions and from the western regions to the maritimes, as well as to the north. There is the problem of captive shippers. Quite frankly in respect of a captive shipper I think all shippers would be much better off if it were their decision to choose whether or not they were to be captive. It should be their choice and not that of the commission. In spite of the fact that the bill includes a broader definition of what a captive shipper is, it would seem to me on the surface that it would be much simpler and much more feasible if indeed the shipper himself, after recourse under this act, was able to elect whether or not he will be a captive shipper and come under the provisions and clauses in the act.

Just to refresh the minister's mind in respect of captive shippers, going back to 1963, shipments moving from the maritimes to western regions under class rates and non-competitive commodity rates in 1963 accounted for 70.7 per cent of all movements. Back in 1949 this figure was 76.3 per cent. It has come down only 6 per cent in the 17 intervening years since 1949. Again, within the maritime region, as pointed out earlier by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Horner), under these two particular classifications, first the class rates and second, the non-competitive commodity rates, the total amount of movement by any standard in 1963 at least was 55.8 per cent. In 1949 it was 89.6 per cent.

I suggest these figures are significant, Mr. Speaker, because they do point out the tremendous number of people in the maritimes who fall into this broad category of captive shipper. It is at this point that I am sorry the minister has left the house. He knew what I was talking about and perhaps that is why he left. It is because of the large classification of people and the fact that it is so substantially large as compared to captive shippers in the central region, and because of the impact that any change in the freight rate is going to have on this large body that I must reiterate

the necessity of incorporating in the act in terms which are clearly spelled out and which leave no doubt in the mind, just what is going to happen in respect of the two year period of freeze on the present structure.

The study being done by the Atlantic provinces transportation group is not due before the government until January 1 of next year. Because of its complexity I am a little sceptical about whether or not they will have a final recommendation for the government by that time. Indeed, a more likely date would be late spring or early summer. Because of this, because of the lapse of time which will take place between now and the time this information is available to us, plus the fact that we now have the government asking for approval in principle of this new bill, and because of this lack of time which is going to lead to further uncertainty and doubts, I suggest that unless something is done at this stage in the passage of this legislation the effect of this bill will be of deterioration and of disadvantage. Further, it will throw obstacles in the way of all economic communities with regard to planning of projects and of production capacities. They will not know where they stand. No businessman is going to enter into expansion ventures of any magnitude when there is doubt and perhaps more than doubt as to the position of the railways.

Perhaps the government does not know what it is going to do. Surely that is not so. Surely we can get some assurances built into this bill, some assurance that will let people plan and which will let them program a project or a proposition on a sound economic basis. It is not enough at today's pace to look two years into the future. Industry needs much more time, much better information and much more solid information upon which to base its projected economic expansion and planning.

Another point I should like to mention is the maximum rate control. It is important to know the definition of a captive shipper, but what is more important is the manner in which the maximum rate is to be calculated. It has been said before, and I will repeat it, that until such time as the actual basis upon which cost is founded becomes a matter of public knowledge, public understanding and public awareness, there will always be misgivings and doubts. An immediate example of this is to be seen in that fact that for years and years people in the maritimes have been