

Railway Act

Mr. Johnston: I accept the remarks made by the hon. member for Royal. I am going to say that if a vote is taken on this section I think the hon. member for Royal will support it. I may be wrong in that. I am not so sure about the others. We will have to wait and see.

Mr. Brooks: They do not all have to get up and say it now.

Mr. Johnston: Some of the hon. members who are voicing their opinions now were not on that committee. Hon. members should have seen the tenacity with which some of those who were opposed to this section hung on to every little thing to try to discourage the committee from passing it. I know it is the business of a lawyer to hang on to those points until he gets everyone so thoroughly disgusted that they say: "Oh, well, I guess we had better let it go." This is a serious problem for Alberta, and we do not intend to take it lightly.

Mr. Harkness: The hon. member for Bow River now seems to have changed his attack a little. He is now attacking me because I was not on the railway committee. In answer to that I should like to say that I believe I have been on as many committees as any hon. member of the House of Commons during the last five or six years. I am generally on about nine each year of one sort or another, standing and special. It happens also that this year I am on the combines committee. A man cannot serve on both committees satisfactorily, particularly when they meet at the same time. The hon. member's former attack was completely unwarranted. His present attack on the basis that I was not on this committee is even more unwarranted.

Mr. Ferguson: And ridiculous.

Mr. Pouliot: Can I act as a peacemaker, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Knowles: No man is better fitted for the job.

Mr. Pouliot: I will say to both hon. gentlemen who have just spoken that they are among the finest members of parliament, although each does not think the same about the other. But it is true nevertheless.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): What does all that mean?

Mr. Churchill: In view of the remarks that have been made in connection with Manitoba and the Conservatives, perhaps I might say a word or two—

Mr. Pouliot: If I may be permitted on a question of privilege to say just a word, I said that of two hon. members; I do not promise to say it of a third one.

Mr. Churchill: I would like to assure the hon. member that everything I am going to say now follows exactly along the line that he has suggested to us. The first is that we maintain a proper sense of proportion, and that we do not get into a violent argument as between western provinces. We have other enemies to fight. I think our position could be put quite clearly. However, I would like to say this before I come to the particular point raised by the hon. member for Bow River. I appreciate very much the importance of the railway committee. I think that has been my most valuable experience here this fall; and I agree with everything that has been said as to the importance of the freight rates structure, and the need for an understanding of it. I agree with hon. members who paid tribute to the royal commission. In my view it performed a most valuable function and has enlightened all Canada with regard to these important freight rates.

The effect of the bill is only that of partial equalization. We must recognize the fact that we had pointed out to us that 41.1 per cent of the railway freight traffic is concerned with matters not affected by this bill at all. Therefore equalization is not over the entire system. Nevertheless the measure of equalization contained within the bill is most agreeable to Manitoba, something that province has been after for years. It meets with the approval of Manitoba. I will say that my opposition in committee was directed only to section 332B, and was based upon representations made by the Manitoba government—and it is not a Conservative government.

I represented in the committee the views of the Manitoba government that were brought to our attention by the representatives who appeared before the committee. I believe their point was fairly well taken. We have heard the statement tonight that Alberta's interest is at stake. Well, Manitoba's interest is at stake; and it is only right that each representative should speak for his own province. Perhaps, as in some other instances, the solution would be by way of compromise. That is all that was suggested in the representations from Manitoba, namely some modification of this particular section. When it comes up for discussion we can deal with it in more detail.

That is all this great fight is about; and it seemed to me it was magnified tonight by the remarks of the hon. member for Bow River. Surely it is only right and proper for provincial representatives to emphasize the stand taken by their respective provinces. We may not win our point. Perhaps the solution offered in the bill is the one which will be