

the drafters perhaps had in mind. It is interesting to see, for example, that there is a very clear and somewhat innovative concept of the divisions of powers reflected in this particular bill. We have a division of powers as between federal, provincial and municipal authorities. This piece of legislation also involves at least two federal ministries, urban affairs and transportation. Clause 7 of the bill also involves the ministry of public works.

This concept of intergovernmental and interdepartmental co-operation is one that has intrigued me greatly. It is one that is welcome in many areas of legislation, and it is needed, for instance, in the activities of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. It is certainly appropriate in the Departments of Urban Affairs and Transportation because, as all members know, there is a growing realization that many of the problems faced in this country require the concerted efforts of more than one government department.

It is very clear that much of the efficacy of this legislation will depend on the efficiency and expedition with which the CTC performs its task. One cannot help but be impressed when one reads this legislation with the great responsibilities the Canadian Transport Commission has. If this commission does not improve its tendency, I would suggest without meaning to be sarcastic, to frustrate to a certain extent and delay proceedings, then I think the thrust of this legislation could be seriously impaired.

There is no particular region in Canada that will not benefit by the provisions of Bill C-27, and I think it is significant in respect of the total transportation picture in this country. I say that because it seems obvious that if this legislation is carried out according to its scope, meaning and apparent intent, it could involve, in some areas of this country, significant rerouting of our major rail lines.

The Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) has said recently that he does recognize that his department lacks an over-all policy. Further to this, it has been pointed out on many occasions that one of the policies which must be considered in respect of the total transportation picture, is a policy in respect of the poor maintenance of the roadbeds of our major rail lines. This has many significant implications.

In addition to this situation, we are aware that a former President of the Canadian National Railway system questioned the priorities involved in allocating many millions of dollars to the STOL program in an attempt to improve transportation links between major cities, particularly in central Canada. This money, which has been tentatively and actually allocated in some cases for this STOL program, as opposed to what might have been done, in the opinion of the former President of the CNR might have been used to improve the rail systems in this country.

The reason I say this bill may have an important effect on our nation's transportation system is that if there are significant changes made to reroute and change some of the present railway rights-of-way, these new additions or changes to be made will presumably be of a modern and highly satisfactory nature in so far as technology is concerned. Having regard to the old adage that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, I would think that somewhat in a converse analogy, when these major rerouting changes are carried out, surely they will by contrast

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expose the inadequacies of much of our railway systems to which they are connected, particularly in serving areas where passenger travel could be very profitable if the roadbeds of the rail lines were upgraded and updated.

For that reason, I think this bill might serve as a catalyst in persuading this government and the Minister of Transport that while they are making these changes in respect of some of the traditional rights of the railways, to which the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) has referred, and to which the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) referred, and I have in mind the traditional rights in respect of expropriation and things of that nature, to use this piece of legislation as a springboard from which to refinance and perhaps rebuild larger stretches of railway rights of way so that Canada can take advantage of some of the technological advances presently known, to improve and upgrade our transportation system generally.

There is no doubt, as the minister has said, that this bill has significance in the realm of urban development. Certain cities, or the core areas of these cities, have to some extent been held back and sometimes actually stunted by the effects of having freightyards and railway rights of way in certain areas which, with the passage of time, are better suited for other purposes. This is true all across the nation. It is true in the city of Winnipeg which is one of the few cities that has had a comprehensive study done in this area. But it is also true of places like Halifax, St. John's Newfoundland and practically anywhere you might want to go across Canada. With the concept expressed in this bill it is obvious the government has recognized the need, even at a great deal of cost, to do something about this situation. Certainly, I think the government is to be commended in this regard.

● (1710)

There is another aspect, of course, of this legislation that is important. It has to do with the terrible safety record our transportation system, particularly rail transport, has accumulated over the years. In comparison to other industrialized nations, it is quite evident that our railway system is at about the bottom of the list. For those members who have not had the opportunity to do so I would really recommend that they make themselves aware of the contents of a study carried out by Professor Lukasiewicz of Carleton University. This man did a very interesting treatise or project involving the history of our railways in this country.

Professor Lukasiewicz paid particular attention to the situation involving the passenger carrying capabilities of the various railways and the failure of the CTC to effect meaningful changes despite the fact it has had a very definite regulatory function since it was formed. Professor Lukasiewicz points out that really the situation in this country's railway development has been one of institutionalized obsolescence. In fact, this is part of the title of the work he has composed. Unless the Minister of Transport is prepared to seize on the initiatives that this particular piece of legislation might provide, and unless he is prepared to carry on and do something tangible pursuant to the speech he made a couple of days ago in Montreal when he said that the railways and not the highways are our hope for the future in this country so far as efficiency