

Transportation

last couple of years we must have better railway facilities and the railways must improve their facilities.

I want to refer to what the minister said last night in regard to how the railways will get money for this. The minister suggested or implied—I do not know if he did so on behalf of the government—that the western grain shipper had been subsidized by the other shippers of Canada. I suggest to the minister and his parliamentary secretary that when they look into this matter they will see that westerners have paid a subsidy to the people of central Canada because of the agreed charges which have been in effect for a number of years. The railways had to agree to certain charges because they faced competition from trucks.

I will not argue about geography or discrimination, but the minister suggested that there is discrimination with regard to rates. I say again that this contract is inviolable. I do not believe there will be a review every three years. We have had these reviews before, the Turgeon Commission, the MacPherson Commission and the one before that, all looking into grain hauling. None of them came up with a unanimous answer about grain hauling costs. We want to see the contract maintained. Should the commission want to do its job well, under clause 15 of the bill it can instigate research and studies. It can tell the railways how to haul grain within the ceiling of the Crowsnest pass rates.

The government should provide leadership. It should provide the necessary studies and research so that the railways may know how to accomplish what I have suggested. We feel strongly about the allegations as to costs put forward in all these reports. The costs that the Canadian National put forward in its representations to the standing committee are so clouded and badly based that they are not an accurate yardstick at all.

Two small lines in western Canada, it has been shown, can haul grain at these rates and make compensatory returns. We feel that all railways can do the same. In the last couple of years grain hauling has increased and the income of the railways has been substantial. Their net income has risen because of this increase. We feel that if the railways had procured modern equipment they could have hauled more grain more quickly, we could have sold more grain, and the railways could have increased their own incomes as a result. We do not accept for a moment that the government needs to direct this commission to review these rates every three years.

[Mr. Horner (Jasper-Edson).]

There are not enough specifics in the bill to show how the commission shall assess the Crowsnest pass rates. In any event, we do not accept the necessity for this review. If the minister wants to shorten this bill he should take out everything after line 29 of clause 50. As I have said, clause 15 gives the commission power to review costs at any time and to make recommendations to the governor in council with regard to them.

If the minister wants to shorten the debate and the bill he should agree to removing everything after subsection 4 of new section 328 in clause 50. We would be a lot farther ahead and we in western Canada would be a lot happier. I cannot impress so strongly on the minister the grave danger he is in by placing on us the stigma of a subsidy—that was the essence of his remarks last night—and the idea that other shippers of Canada are subsidizing western Canada in the movement of grain. We do not accept that.

Mr. Pickersgill: I do not think the hon. gentleman wants to be unfair, but I never suggested any such thing. I said that if there was loss I knew of only two ways in which it could be made good. One would be out of the treasury and the other would be out of freight rates paid by other shippers. I said that if there was loss I thought the loss should be made good out of the treasury. At no time did I suggest there was a loss. I refused to put that in the bill this time although I had put it in Bill C-120. I refused to put it in because I thought we ought to find out about it. It is not quite fair to misrepresent me by suggesting that I thought there was a loss just because Mr. MacPherson thought there was. I refuse to accept the view that there is a loss. I also do not regard it as an article of faith that there is no loss. I honestly admit I am ignorant; I do not know. I am entitled to find out what the facts are and the people of Canada, the taxpayers of Canada, are entitled to find out what the facts are. That is all that clause 329 does. It substitutes fact for faith. If the hon. gentleman's faith is justified he ought not to object to the facts.

Mr. Horner (Jasper-Edson): This is why I suggested to the minister that we in western Canada object to the stigma of a subsidy. By including this clause the government implies the stigma of a subsidy. Clause 15 gives the commission all the power that is required to study these matters. Let me refer him to paragraph (b) of clause 15 which reads as follows:—undertake studies and research into the economic aspects of all modes of transport within, into or from Canada;