

*Transportation*

bill, are we just to accept the bland assurance of the minister that we have only those two things to decide and that our votes are just with regard to those two matters? I say we have to include the one stressed by the hon. member for Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I wonder if the hon. gentleman would not agree that the question of appropriate freight rates is obviously an aspect of rationalization?

**Mr. Churchill:** Of course, and I hope we get appropriate freight rates; but I think this is the major concern. When you are asking people who have felt the pressure of freight rates over the years to vote in favour of this bill on second reading, you are asking a great deal if they have not yet received all the information that should be made available to them.

• (9:20 p.m.)

That is why we on this side of the house have repeatedly requested that the subject matter of this bill be referred to the committee before we are asked to vote on second reading. One can become trapped as a result of a vote on second reading.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. gentleman another question? He has been very courteous about answering my queries. In 1964 I yielded to exactly the same request and sent the subject matter of a bill, which had provisions very similar to these with regard to freight rates, to a committee. There was an exhaustive examination made by that parliamentary committee, which heard representatives from all over the country, as a result of which certain modifications were made as represented in the present bill. May I ask the hon. gentleman how many times this same process has to be carried out before we can get on with the job that the hon. member's leader promised to do, when he was in power within six months of the time the 1960 bill to keep the railwaymen at work was passed?

**Mr. Churchill:** There is no question about the fact that the government of which I was a member made improvements to the legislation, because the minister constantly refers to them. The minister can certainly look to our term in office as an example for his government to follow.

I recall that the subject matter of the 1964 bill was referred to the committee for study; but what is wrong with that? If that was

[Mr. Churchill.]

done in 1964 and it proved to be helpful, as the minister has said it was, why should we not follow that practice again? The minister has now enlarged the bill, provided for another board and declared a national transportation policy. Conditions have altered materially in the past two years. I suggest that these conditions should be re-examined and that the subject matter of this bill should be sent to a committee. Perhaps once again improvements will be suggested. The minister admits that improvements were made as a result of the committee examination in 1964. That was a good procedure to follow then and I suggest it should be repeated now.

I object to the sense of urgency the minister has imported into this discussion by his suggestion that we should get on with this business now. I am opposed to this kind of instant legislation. When we do things rapidly in this house we are doing things in a hurried and stupid manner.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Six years have passed since your leader promised legislation of this kind.

**Mr. Churchill:** We received the reports of the MacPherson commission in the summer of 1962 and we produced a bill and put it on the order paper. I well remember the session of 1962-63 when we were not able to persuade the opposition to be anything like as co-operative as the present opposition is. This opposition has been sustaining this government for over three years. Were it not for the efforts of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) and his supporters the present government would find itself in worse trouble than it has been in during the past three years. Who was it that saved the situation last week but the Leader of the Opposition, with the support of his colleagues and the members of the New Democratic Party? Canada's greatest blunderers are sitting over on that side of the house.

All the information attendant upon the preparation of the MacPherson report and the bill which followed has been available to the present, unfortunately incompetent government which Canada selected in 1963. Three and a half years have elapsed between the time of the election of this government and the presentation of the bill now before us. The minister now says: Let us get on with this bill, which should have been dealt with yesterday. I say there is no need for haste and that if we move too quickly we may make mistakes. We have found out from bitter experience that mistakes can be made when parliament moves too hurriedly.