

*Transportation*

on clause 1, other members once again got in ahead of me. But I realize, as the discussion goes on, that the first mistake of the minister was to show excessive tolerance to the other members who break the rules of the house. We have here, I feel, the natural result that ensues when the rules are not observed. I am completely opposed to this idea of standing consideration of clause 1 to the end of the debate. We see now what happens in such a case. We stand clause 1 and go on to clause 20, 50, 60 or 75 and then revert to clause 1 and to the point where we have to listen to members speak four or five times on clause 1. We can even see amendments to clause 4 or 75 brought forth on clause 1.

I think we are making the worst imaginable mess of this thing and that we cannot entirely blame one group or another for it, although one newspaperman took it upon himself to blame the whole opposition saying that the opposition was carrying out a filibuster.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to point out at this time that I am the first of my party to rise to speak on this transport bill. I have only general remarks to make but this I should like to say to the newspaperman I have mentioned and for whom I have much esteem: I am very surprised at his statement because he usually is very careful about what he writes. He seems to have taken leave of his good habits this time. It may be that certain parties gave the newspaperman the impression that a filibuster was being carried out but there again, I am not ready to cast the first stone at anyone because in view of the significance of this bill, it is quite normal I think that such a discussion be foreseen, particularly on the part of the Conservatives, but I should not like to put all the blame on them because if more Conservatives seem to take part in this discussion, it may be because we have been discussing the problems of the west for the last 12 days.

In this regard, I was saying a few minutes ago that I am most anxious to get out, to fly out, once and for all from this Crowsnest pass.

We have been in the Crowsnest pass for about ten days and I wonder when it will hatch. Here again, I am not blaming the members from western Canada, because they are pleading their case, and I only hope that from now on we shall adhere to the rules. I object especially to any violation of the rules, because if we had fully complied with the standing orders, we would not be experiencing our present difficulties today.

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I do not wish to speak too long on the subject, because I tried to take a few notes so as to keep my remarks to a minimum and avoid incurring the accusations often made by journalists against the opposition.

Mr. Chairman, allow me first of all to congratulate the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill). We have few opportunities to do so, but I must commend him for his continual attendance in the house during the discussion of his bill. He is also to be commended for his repeated interventions, because it seems, at first sight, that he has taken up alone half the time devoted to this study. It was worthwhile, since we shall probably pass within a few days one of the most important bills for the country. The minister was therefore right when, in his statement at the committee stage, as reported on page 11372 of *Hansard* for December 20, 1966, he gave the following warning:

I think we all realize that transportation, as I have said too many times already, is the bony structure of our country and that it is very important to keep the skeleton healthy if the body politic is to be at all healthy. We had a big responsibility, when we came to do something about its basic structure, to make sure that we did it well.

In fact, Bill No. C-231 indicates the course of action for the future Canadian Transport Commission. I must say also that I was greatly surprised when, after that introduction, the minister told the house that this bill should be passed before December 31, 1966, in order to avoid the legal and administrative effects of a delay.

Those are very surprising words coming from a minister whom I always considered very sincere.

The minister knew very well, when he said this, that he was asking the house to do the impossible. He knew very well that the budget contained no provision for further payments to the railways after December 31, 1966. The minister also knew that the order in council dealing with the freeze on present rates for grain moved to Atlantic and eastern ports was due to lapse on December 31, 1966.

He was perfectly aware of the conditions set forth by the railways with respect to abandonment of branch lines on so-called protected lines. Knowing all this, why was the bill not introduced two months earlier? Why was it not brought down ahead of the medicare bill, for example, which will only be put into operation in 1968? Why did he take such a risk with the economy of our