

Freight Rates Reduction Act

amendment we are being asked to re-endorse the Freight Rates Reduction Act which lapsed several months ago. We are being asked to extend it for another 12 month period, with an additional \$20 million to be used in the same manner as the original act.

While this proposal can be supported, it can only be supported in the knowledge that the government considers this to be a stop-gap piece of legislation and that it is willing to undertake an overhaul of the whole transport authority. The minister said this would be considered, but I am doubtful if that can be done in time for us to do anything about it in this session of parliament, or even during the lifetime of this parliament. However, I suggest that if the government is really sincere in wanting to do a complete overhaul job, integrating all various aspects of road transportation, rail transportation, piggy-back services, air lines and water transportation then there is no better time to do it than now, when the government would be able to ask the assistance of other parties which make up this minority parliament.

With regard to passenger services, it is interesting to note that the local people in Ottawa, particularly at a time when they are holding a civic election, are questioning whether to put apartment buildings, a theatre, or stores as an extension of the mall on the site of the Ottawa railway terminal in the centre of the city. It seems to me the traveling public could get a greater advantage out of commuter service if the train continues to come right into the centre of the city, instead of being disembarked many miles out of town in a new station which will probably be archaic in a few years time.

I believe the minister should give top priority to introducing positive proposals for the establishment of a new authority, and to setting up a committee to discuss the whole matter of developing that new authority in ways that will assist the three major groups involved, namely the people who form the passenger public, the shippers of freight who contribute to the bulk of railway revenues, and the employees of the railways.

If the minister could give that assurance then I believe this would be acceptable in the short term, but otherwise I see no reason to spend an extra \$20 million to handle problems we have not been able to solve in the years since 1958 when this was considered to be only a temporary measure of an interim nature.

Resolution reported and concurred in.

Mr. Balcer thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. C-91, to amend the Freight Rates Reduction Act.

[Mr. Peters.]

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the said bill be read a second time? Next sitting of the house?

Mr. Balcer: I have some indication, Mr. Speaker, that it might be possible to have second reading of the bill today because it will be sent to a committee. If it were agreeable to the house we might have second reading now and send the bill to the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Speaker, as an indication of our desire to be co-operative, I think those of us who sit on this side of the house would be quite willing, subject of course to the approval of the other parties, to have this bill receive second reading now, on condition that it is sent for consideration to the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines.

Mr. Speaker: By consent, is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Balcer moved the second reading of the bill.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines.

PUBLIC HARBOURSAPPROVAL OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN
CANADA AND ONTARIO

Hon. Leon Balcer (Minister of Transport) moved the second reading of Bill No. C-59, to approve an agreement between the government of Canada and the government of the province of Ontario respecting public harbours.

He said: Section 108 of the British North America Act provides that the public works and property of each province enumerated in the third schedule to that act shall be the property of Canada, and included in the third schedule is "public harbours". This provision vested in the crown, in the right of Canada, ownership of the bed and foreshore of all public harbours in Canada that were actually being used as such at the time of confederation. However, the British North America Act did not list and describe those harbours and in some cases there are doubts as to whether a harbour became the property of Canada; and in many cases it is difficult or impossible to determine what were the precise limits of those harbours at the time of confederation.

It is recognized that what actually became the property of Canada under the heading "public harbours" were those areas which were actually being used at the time of confederation for the anchorage of vessels, the