

balanced economic growth in this country, key to the establishment of a sound industrial base, and key to the provision of some semblance of national unity. Yet the subject matter has not progressed from the order paper, has not been considered by the committee, and we have not had the opportunity to obtain the views and opinions of the numerous people engaged and interested in transportation in this country, the shippers, the carriers, and everyone who has a vital interest in transportation.

We think it would have been much more appropriate to deal with the total package, to have a comprehensive program and then to put the respective pieces of legislation together, such as the ports act. There has been a suggestion that we should proceed with the ports act. Also, in our view, we should proceed with the amendments to the National Transportation Act before we proceed with this bill because it contains the outline, the basic policy guidelines and the framework of a comprehensive national transportation system in this country. We think that the National Transportation Act requires a substantial amount of debate because there are regional differences on the matter, there are various freight rate anomalies, and safety in the movement of goods is but one element. So we think it would have been more appropriate to deal with it in the orderly fashion I suggest rather than in the way in which we are proceeding.

I know that the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) has no control over this, that he has simply submitted this bill on behalf of his colleague, and I certainly do not fault him, but I think that that message should ring very clearly in the minds of government members because we have not proceeded in an effective fashion in dealing with the transportation problems in our country. We have a serious grain transportation problem and serious problems relative to air safety, so it seems to me that a clear and co-ordinated transportation policy should be put in place. We have a committee of the House, and we can utilize the institution of parliament in a much more effective way than we have done to deal with these important issues.

I said at the outset of my remarks that we approve of the principle of the bill before us and indeed of its objectives, but I must say that we insist that these objectives be met without imposing excessive costs or hardships, and with the minimum of restraint put upon the operations of the carriers and the shippers. It must be recognized by all concerned—because we consider this to be a very important piece of legislation—that this bill is really an extension of the Criminal Code, not merely a transportation law. Although the minister indicated that this was enabling legislation, I suspect, although I am not a lawyer, that it tends to minimize its enabling aspects. This bill has many implications, and the impact of its regulations will have a critical effect. So it is absolutely necessary for the regulations which will be prescribed to be reasonable, well-founded, and understood, and that the implications with respect to their enforcement be clearly considered.

The minister spoke about the importance of the bill's international aspects. While this is true, we must not lose sight of

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the fact that for the time being, and perhaps for some time in the future, our major trading partner is and will be the United States.

● (1600)

Before adopting any set of regulations we should consult to the fullest with the industry and the provinces. The key to the effectiveness of this piece of legislation certainly is inherent in the regulations. The provinces must make major contributions in determining what the regulations will be because of the enabling aspect of it and the clear constitutional responsibility of the provinces.

That brings me to the dangerous goods code, and perhaps I might call it four o'clock before dealing with that subject.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, before we proceed to private members' hour, I wonder if there was not an agreement yesterday that we would pass without debate today the motion to refer a document entitled "The Management of Canada's Nuclear Wastes" to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works. If that is the case, and if there is a disposition to carry out that undertaking, perhaps it can be done now.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, respecting the point of order, there was such an agreement. We would be prepared to do that now.

While I am on my feet I should like to mention that there was some discussion earlier in the day concerning the possibility of the government making available later this day the bill respecting the allocation of petroleum and energy, if that is the appropriate way to describe it, and if I recall the minister's words correctly. The government was to attempt to make available that bill to the House, to introduce it and distribute it so that it can be studied.

While the parliamentary secretary is dealing with the matter of the reference to which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre referred, he might tell us whether the government will introduce that bill now. As we mentioned earlier, we are prepared to revert to introduction of bills in order to do that. We were left with the impression that that might be done this afternoon. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary can inform the House.

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, concerning the motion to refer the document entitled "The Management of Canada's Nuclear Wastes" to the appropriate committee, an agreement was arrived at yesterday. Thus, that is not a problem.

Concerning the request of the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton, I understand he expected the bill to be introduced today with the consent of the House.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Yes.