

Transportation

However, I did not realize their significance until one day an hon. member was speaking in this chamber and referred, I believe, to the religious significance of the Crowsnest pass rates, at which he drew probably the biggest hand of any of the members who took part in the debate. So in view of this spiritual comparison in regard to the Crowsnest pass rates I do not believe that the minister or anybody else had better start thinking about changing them.

Mr. Pickersgill: I suppose what the hon. member is trying to say is that the minister had to eat crow.

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): I am glad the minister is in a good humour; I think this is because he sees an end to the legislation.

I also think we should recognize that in its brief the Canadian Pacific Railway pointed out very forcibly that there was, if I may use its words, a shortfall of revenue from the Crow rates, and it demanded reimbursement from the government. This was probably the main contention of the brief. It is quite right that we did have a battle on this issue, which has now been resolved.

We tend to make the railways, particularly the C.P.R., whipping boys in legislation of this nature, and I for one do not want to be misunderstood in this regard. I am very proud of the C.P.R. as a private enterprise Canadian institution. I do not agree with the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) who has attacked the C.P.R. and its policies many times. I am not saying that everything it does is right, but when I do say something that appears to be critical of the company in instances such as those we have discussed it is because of the relationship of the C.P.R. to the government and because of my responsibility as a member of parliament in regard to this relationship as it affects certain of their activities, though not all of them.

The big issue put forward by the province of Manitoba—I mentioned it half a dozen times to the minister but never really got any satisfaction—concerned the proposed section 336 and the lack of any limit on the rates, particularly those applicable to bulk commodities. The representatives of the government of Manitoba pointed out that in their opinion there would not be any economies from heavier loading of bulk commodities. They further pointed out that the relationship of the contribution of such loads to the total variable cost was out of line with the surveys they had taken, with waybill analysis, and the like.

[Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert).]

I mentioned that in its many briefs to the committee, particularly with respect to passenger service, the C.P.R. referred a great deal to its responsibility as a private enterprise development company in Canada and to how it must not misuse our resources. The brief pointed out that it should not be compelled to continue to provide passenger service when it was uneconomical and unreasonable to do so. I say that this is right and I agree with the C.P.R. on this as a general proposition. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I throw back to them the point that, in the case of large bulk commodity shipments there might be such misallocation or misuse of resources. I would also point out that in the province of Saskatchewan rates on potash and the like might go sky high. The industry might be able to survive for a while, but there would not be any declaration as a captive shipper and the money required to meet other competition later would have to be derived from the economy of the west, from labour reassessment, and the like. I think that is an important point and it was one of the main contentions put forward by the province of Manitoba.

My third point, as you may have guessed, Mr. Speaker, concerns the maritimes and what we have been able to accomplish for that region of Canada. Let me tell the minister I am not happy with the treatment given to the maritimes by this legislation. I think there has been a whittling away of our position, such as it is. We are anxiously waiting for the completion of the transportation survey, to which I alluded at the beginning of my remarks, and we hope and pray that something good will come out of it. In the meantime we have been forced to fight a tough rearguard action to hold on to what little protection we do have in this legislation.

It will only take me a moment or two to try to summarize the other matters which were dealt with. The minister, and I give him credit, after three amendments had been moved followed through on the matter of flour and I think we do at least have the same protection on flour shipments from eastern Canadian ports that we formerly had. In clause 59, which was amended during the latter stages of consideration of the bill, there is the phrase "to route traffic through Canadian seaports". This could be of some benefit to us.

Clauses 1 and 16 were also amended and contain the phrase "undue obstacle to the movement of commodities through Canadian ports". These were the two substantial