

Private Bills

[English]

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order for the purpose of clarification. Yesterday the Secretary of State for External Affairs indicated he would table an important document on an agreement between Canada and Norway. Is he in a position to table this document, and would the procedure permit him to do so at this time?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I have the necessary documents to table. Perhaps I will get a chance before the day is out to ascertain that I have fulfilled the requirements of the hon. gentleman and then I will ask to revert to motions to table them.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, private bills, notices of motions, public bills.

PRIVATE BILLS

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY

Mr. Jerome (Sudbury) (for Mr. Sulatycky) moved that Bill S-21, respecting Canadian Pacific Railway Company, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, it was not intended to proceed with this bill. As I understand it, it is to provide authority to build a short piece of railway line to a pulp mill that now is not going to be established. The explanatory note reads:

The purpose of this bill is to authorize Canadian Pacific Railway Company to construct and operate—

Here I quote from clause 1:

—a line of railway commencing from a point in the southwest 1/4 of section 15, township 59, range 14, west of the third meridian in the vicinity of Sergeant, in the province of Saskatchewan, at or near mile 75.5 of the company's Meadow Lake subdivision, thence generally in a northerly direction for a distance of 62 miles more or less to a point at or near the boundary between township 68 and township 69, range 12, west of the third meridian in the vicinity of the confluence of the Beaver and Dore Rivers in the said province.

Clause 2 provides:

If the construction of the said line of railway is not commenced within a period of two years or is not completed and put in operation within a period of five years after the passing of this act, the powers of construction hereby conferred upon the company shall cease and be null and void as regards so much of the said line of railway as shall then remain uncompleted.

This piece of spur line in the Meadow Lake subdivision is to serve a pulp and paper plant to be constructed by Athabasca Forest Industries Ltd. Canadian Pacific is asking for this authority from Parliament because the power of the Canadian Transport Commission to authorize construction of branch lines is limited to lines not exceeding 20 miles in length.

It would appear that this branch line is to be built to move the products of Athabasca Forest Industries from that area to the main line. I presume this request for authorization is the result of negotiations between

Canadian Pacific and Athabasca Forest Industries Ltd. This pulp and paper mill was the subject of controversy in Saskatchewan, in particular during the recent provincial election. I presume that following the change of government in Saskatchewan the project has been scuttled. It was one of the grandiose schemes of the late Mr. Thatcher, but the election has changed the circumstances relating to it and I am surprised that the sponsor of the bill has not seen fit to withdraw it.

This afternoon we had an example of the inefficiency of Parliament. Things are not done here in the manner that the man in the street would expect. They are not done as I would expect. It seems logical to me that if construction of the pulp and paper mill is not to proceed, the sponsor of the bill and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company have a responsibility to Parliament to withdraw the bill. I point out that the Senate has already held a hearing on the bill and that in fact Canadian Pacific has another bill before Parliament with respect to the building of a pipeline; in fact, that bill succeeds this one on the order paper.

I can recall when Parliament gave authorization to the Labrador-North Shore Railway Company to build a railway line in the province of Quebec. The line was to go to Ungava and was actually built from Seven Islands to Labrador City. The company refused to put the line into Wabash where another mining company had an operation under development. In fact, the railway company had its own mining operations and even though it had the right to extend the line it wished to keep competing mining companies out of the area. In other words, they did not want to live up to their responsibility as a railway company but wanted to live up to their responsibility as a mining corporation. Until they were ready to mine they did not want anybody else mining there, so although there were seven or eight major iron properties in that area the railway would not be constructed.

• (5:10 p.m.)

The clause in this bill was also in that bill. They came before Parliament at least three times and asked for an extension of five years without any intention of building the line within that time. What they did was get a licence to build it so they could keep everybody else out, which they did. After the third extension this House, in its wisdom, refused to give an additional extension to the railway.

The Wabash iron mines wanted to build a line beyond Labrador City and were told that not only would this railway company not extend the line to Wabash but they would not allow connections from Wabash to the Labrador Northshore line. There was a Supreme Court case and the decision was reached that Wabash would be given a line because they threatened to put a line of their own right down to the St. Lawrence. They were given the right to put in a line and connect to this other line at Labrador City. Northshore was instructed that they must carry the iron ore from Wabash because they were given the right to be a common carrier and therefore could not restrict anyone else from using the facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this bill should be withdrawn. I see nothing wrong with Canadian Pacific Railway coming to Parliament and asking for the right to put in this line. However, as I understand the Railway Act