

*Transportation*

things of that nature, but I shall spare the house any more of his words.

I should like to direct the attention of the house to something else along general lines. The minister has made a great deal out of the fact that he is now declaring a national transportation policy. One would have thought there had not been such a policy in the past, but of course there has always been a transportation policy for Canada, and it has to be modified from time to time.

In 1919 when they were incorporating the Canadian National Railways the gentlemen who then occupied this chamber discussed matters of policy. They said what they were then doing was bringing in a policy of public ownership, taking over privately owned railway lines, incorporating them into the Canadian National Railways, assuming the financial obligations, and naming a board of directors to run the Canadian National Railways as a crown corporation. They said that the policy then being adopted was one of public ownership. Therefore if the minister is going to give us a definition of national policy he should include historically some of the things that happened in the past.

What was the transportation policy in the years when the C.P.R. was being established? What was the transportation policy when the various privately owned lines were assembled together to make the C.N.R.? That policy holds to this day, but the minister has not incorporated that in his statement. But with a bit of fanfare he gives us a national transportation policy, and in it he treats us to the platitude that an economic and efficient transportation system, making the best use of all available modes of transportation at the lowest cost, is essential to the well-being and growth of Canada. There is nothing new about that. I do not think the minister dreamt that up himself.

Then he suggests, in his declaration of national policy, three matters that should be considered. He mentions regulation with due regard to the national interest, each mode of transportation bearing a fair proportion of the real costs of resources and facilities provided at public expense, and compensation for each mode of transportation for facilities and services that it is required to provide as an imposed public duty. This, he says, constitutes Canada's national transportation policy; but I do not think it is comprehensive enough.

Several hon. members have dealt with the interpretation of the words "national

interest." It would be rather difficult to define the national interest. It appears differently to different people and to different areas of the country. I am speaking tonight as a representative of the province of Manitoba, and what is good for Manitoba is good for Canada. That is the national interest because we are a wealth producing province and if we are strong and wealthy all Canada benefits. I suppose every province in Canada could say the same thing, but when a minister considers that as breaking new ground in announcing a national transportation policy he should enlarge it and make it complete and comprehensive. I think he should have added that no area of Canada should bear a disproportionate share of freight rates.

This is what has concerned people in western Canada for many years. This was my concern in 1958 and 1959 when we were faced with another horizontal increase after I don't know how many had been imposed since the end of the war. As a representative from western Canada and the province of Manitoba I was naturally disturbed that this would happen. As a result of the situation at that time grants were made, always with the hope that they would be temporary. But they never are, and subsequently the MacPherson commission was appointed to make a full investigation and to give us the facts.

On the question of national transportation policy I think that the minister has not done justice to the ability which resides in him and to the advice he might be able to receive from his competent officials. How people are going to interpret national interest when they are dealing with the regulation of modes of transport will be an interesting controversy to observe. A 17-man transport board is going to determine some of these matters in relation to the national interest, and the national interest may differ depending on individuals and where people live.

When he was urging us to have a short debate and pass second reading, the minister suggested that there were two principles in the bill, and if we voted for it on second reading all we would be approving was that there should be a Canadian Transport Commission and that there should be railway rationalization. The hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) immediately pointed out that there was a third matter, the matter of rate making.

When we come to the point of deciding whether or not to vote for this bill on second reading, which is approval in principle of the