

*Transportation*

have come before this parliament, in view of its economic consequences in every part of this nation. This measure will affect people in every part of Canada and it will change the complexion of many of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation also deals with pipe lines. Recently we have witnessed the spectacle of the Energy Board approving the setting up of a pipe line which has been vetoed by the government. Many people in this country think that this decision will cost the consumers of gas in Ontario and Quebec several extra cents per cubic foot. This is one case which leads us to think that when this bill is sent to a committee which has been given the chance to hear representations and to consider them in the light of today's conditions, recommendations may be made amending certain clauses.

I should like to say a few words regarding rail rationalization. I know that there might be one or two railway lines which are uneconomic and can be abandoned. I believe that this has already been done by some of the railways as a result of the unkempt conditions of parts of the tracks. I know of one or two rail lines that were designated for removal in the area I represent, and yet I feel that these lines have been essential for the delivery of grain over the past few years.

This matter raises another question, and that is the effect which the removal or abandonment of lines will have on individual producers in the prairies. The Crowsnest pass rates are supposed to be the Magna Carta of confederation. The first settlers in those areas endeavoured to make Canada the grain bin of the empire, on the understanding that the Crowsnest pass rates would prevail. Now we are facing the prospect of the government, or a commission, taking that right away from them. I wonder whether there is some provision in this bill which would recompense these people for the losses they must bear.

Mr. Pickersgill: I should like to ask a question of the hon. member, for my information. Is he seeking, by the statement he just made, to imply that under this legislation the Crowsnest pass rates will be changed in any way? The fact is they are not altered in any way under this legislation, and this government has no intention whatsoever of doing so or of supporting any alteration of them in any way whatever.

Mr. Nasserden: Well, Mr. Speaker, I accept the minister's assurance, but the fact remains that regardless of whether the Crowsnest pass

rates are altered or not, when a rail line is abandoned the farmer has to haul his grain perhaps 40 miles instead of 7 or 8, as a result of which his costs are raised, because of an action taken by the government of Canada. There is no question about it. The minister laughs. This proves that the minister never in his life hauled a bushel of grain.

Mr. Pickersgill: I hauled grain before the hon. gentleman was born.

Mr. Nasserden: I would hope there was some progress in every generation.

Mr. Pickersgill: I did not have a truck to do it with either; we had horses.

Mr. Nasserden: I was wondering whether it might not have been in the days of the oxen.

I do not wish to take up any more time of the house. But I do bring to the attention of the minister the fact that people in the farming communities of western Canada are not happy with the prospect of having to haul grain 40 miles instead of 7 or 8 miles.

The minister mentioned that improved roads might take the place of rails. I hope this meant that the federal government or the proposed transport commission will be prepared to enter into agreements with the provinces in those areas where lines are abandoned to provide for the construction of better highways, which would take the heavier load which will be placed on them owing to the abandonment and dislocation of certain railway lines. I want to assure the minister that western Canada is not as unreasonable as some newspapers have indicated in the last few days. We know the budget of the railways has to be considered; but nowhere in this bill is it stated how the railways are to find the money to pay the increased costs.

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. gentleman seems to agree with the president of the C.P.R.

Mr. Nasserden: This might be the first time. After having seen the transformation which took place following the discussions between the great champion of the farmers of western Canada, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene), and the president or maybe the vice president of the C.P.R., I am glad to announce to you, Mr. Speaker, that I have not had any interviews with the president of the C.P.R. and I will avoid having one with him.