

*Transportation*

car that there should have been in the period we have under review at this time. In considering the history of grain handling in western Canada, another matter we should take into consideration is the automation that has taken place in regard to locomotives, locomotive power and the load that a locomotive will now pull.

Also in this connection I think of the elimination of the many stations that has taken place in western Canada, and the encroachment that will take place in the years ahead. If we consider all these things we cannot come to any conclusion but that the cost of carrying a bushel of grain today is much less than it was at the time these rights were given to those who handled grain in western Canada. While at that time they were considered to be guarantees to the farmers and communities of western Canada, today they have to be considered in the context of this bill, which talks so much about competition. Realizing that this particular section of the bill looks only one way, namely to rising costs, we cannot help but feel that it is unjustified in so far as concerns the conditions that have prevailed in the handling and transportation of grain by the railways over the past several years.

In this connection we must consider what the railways have failed to do in regard to those areas in which lines could have operated profitably over the last 20 years in the communities of western and northern Canada. We must also realize the other factors that enter into the cost, not only in regard to the shipment of grain but in regard to the shipment of other commodities, and the effect this has on the slowing down of the development of certain parts of our nation. To introduce a special section in this bill that would have no effect other than to discourage further the search for and utilization of modern handling facilities in the movement of grain seems to be one of those impossibilities that in the year 1967 in the parliament of Canada should not be considered at all.

As I have said, this section uses the words, "not later than three years after the coming into force of this section." The period is not stated. As I read the section, I gather that one could refer back to any period of time to figure out what the costs have been. The new section continues:

—the commission shall inquire into the revenues and costs of railway companies subject to the jurisdiction of parliament... and shall report such revenues and costs to the governor in council and the amount of payments necessary, in the opinion

[Mr. Nasserden.]

of the commission, to assist such railway companies to meet the costs of operations in respect of the carriage of grain and grain products after the 31st day of December, 1969, at such level of rates:—

• (9:20 p.m.)

When we take a look at the cost accounting which was part of the various submissions from the railways in the years gone by, the failure on their part to substantiate their claims that they have incurred losses in the movement of grain under the Crowsnest pass rates, and the failure of this bill to provide what I believe to be the necessary machinery for parliament to study this matter effectively, we must come to the conclusion once again that this is an open door for the railways to make profits which will affect the welfare of western Canada.

We who come from western Canada do not wish to see a review undertaken every three or five years which would raise the same old divisions which have been raised so many times in the past. I think that it ill-becomes a minister of the government representing one of the historic political parties in this country, which has given lip service to the fact that the Crowsnest pass rates were part of the Magna Carta of western Canada. We do not want to be presented with a clause which would have no other effect than periodically to question the validity of those rates and raise in the minds of people in other parts of this nation the question as to whether the government is indeed subsidizing one section of the country for a particular reason.

I know the minister would like to pass over this matter quickly. He can do so by withdrawing this particular clause because I do not believe it serves any useful purpose. It attacks the very fundamentals of the principle which has been referred to over the years by countless Liberals as the Magna Carta of western Canada. Surely the minister, great Liberal that he is, would not want to attack that principle, coming, as he so often likes to remind us, from the great city of Winnipeg, the gateway to the west. Surely the minister does not wish to be the one to obliterate all the good resolutions of the Liberals before him.

Let us take a look at the advances that have been made not only in transportation but in every other field of endeavour. The parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Transport shakes his head. We all know he is opposed to the Crowsnest pass rates. He is against the unity which they have given to this country. This used to be one of the arguments which the Liberal party supported but which they do not support any longer, as is