

*Transportation*

We have before us, of course, a bill that outlines the government's thinking with respect to a national transportation policy and the means of achieving that objective. A number of methods have been used to try to explain the contents of the bill and the effect it will have upon the transportation systems in Canada. We had the statement of the minister when introducing this measure. It was a rather complete statement and outlined the role transportation has played in the development of our nation, and the need for a realistic transportation policy to enable Canada to develop, prosper and progress as it ought. In addition to the minister's statement we have had presented to us what I suppose we might call the layman's guide that was drawn up by the minister in an endeavour to put into understandable language for those of us who are laymen in the field the meanings, purposes and objectives of the bill, and the way it will work out in reaching the objectives enunciated.

Then just yesterday noon we had a briefing session at which the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Turner) and some of the officials of the department made themselves available for questioning and explanations in connection with this measure. In addition we have listened now to a considerable number of participants as they have made their contribution to this debate. I for one have endeavoured to listen to all of them, and think I have succeeded to a large degree in an attempt to understand more fully just what is comprehended in this particular measure. I say, Mr. Speaker, and I think others share the same view, that in spite of all these things there are many questions that remain unanswered; there are many fears that are still not allayed; there are many clauses which are so controversial that it will take a considerable amount of discussion, debate and analysis before we can really understand their full implication.

Mention has been made of the branch line abandonment suggestions. I believe that my colleague the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) brought out a very important point when he stated that care must be taken to ensure that in a case where a line is to be abandoned other forms of transportation are available so that those areas will not be left out in the cold. Another aspect of the bill that is causing grave doubt is that having to do with the rates structure and the suggestion that this will enable the railways to recoup their losses, as it were, or increase their

revenue in order to take up the slack and meet the other provisions of the bill.

Many have expressed grave concern about the effect of the application of the provisions of this bill upon the various regions of Canada. I know we all like to think in terms of a national policy, and we must do so. We like to think of Canada as a great and growing nation, and so we are. But in spite of that fact I think we must be forced, and we will be forced, to realize that although we are one nation there are several distinct geographical areas, and the effect of the implementation of any measure must be considered in the light of its effect upon our regions.

Therefore I think the members from the maritimes have a right to express grave concern about the possible effects of this bill in relation to the maritimes area. Those from the prairie provinces have expressed their doubts and fears. Those from the two central provinces of Ontario and Quebec are fearful lest they will be called upon to bear the major share of the increased cost that may be involved through the implementation of this measure.

We in British Columbia also fear that this measure will have a detrimental effect upon our province. The question has been raised and the fear expressed that British Columbia may find its adverse position aggravated still further if this bill becomes law and its provisions implemented. It is always a cause of concern that the freight rates are higher when shipping east from Vancouver than the rates to ship toward Vancouver. I think this is a discriminatory position that must be rectified in the very near future. British Columbia is developing rapidly as an industrial part of Canada, and therefore I believe the people of British Columbia should have the right and the facilities for access to the markets of Canada to the same degree as those in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Therefore I believe that the fears which have been expressed with respect to the various aspects of this bill are well founded.

Many references have been made to the complexity of Bill No. C-231. I for one share that particular view, namely, that it is practically impossible for one who is not accustomed to dealing with these particular matters to understand just what is involved and what the over-all effect will be of the application of such a measure. Clarifications, explanations and additional information must be secured, and I believe that the best place to secure this is in a committee. Therefore, if