

Transportation

I place emphasis on the word "shall". When one looks at sub-clause 2 he will see that if a licence or certificate of public convenience and necessity is revoked the matter can be appealed to the minister and the minister shall certify his opinion to the commission. The commission is compelled to obey explicitly the minister's direction.

For the sake of efficiency we are turning great sections of our economy, represented by the spectrum of transportation, over to a board. For the sake of efficiency in handling matters in respect of granting or revoking licences, we are removing the provisions which allow a review by the governor in council, and placing that in the hands of the minister.

Mr. Pickersgill: This is precisely what is now contained in the Aeronautics Act.

Mr. Hamilton: That fact does not destroy my argument. In fact, it supports the general argument I want to make in respect of the amendment which will be moved by the hon. member for Peace River to clause 20 of the bill. We must have some form of parliamentary control. There must be some machinery to provide control over the board and over the ministers.

It was my intention to give the minister a preview of the argument I intend to make when we consider clause 20. I have pointed out the word "shall". If that compulsion is contained in the Aeronautics Act, that supports my argument that parliament should not be put into a limbo in this regard.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am one of those old-fashioned individuals who believes in responsible government. A minister is responsible to parliament and is answerable to parliament for everything he does. The reason the appeal was made applicable to the minister rather than the governor in council, in these matters was that advisers to Her Majesty and the governor have many things to do, as the hon. gentleman knows, having been one of Her Majesty's advisers—although his advice is temporarily not being sought.

If one provides for too many appeals to the governor in council one of two things will happen; they will either be dealt with in a very cursory manner or will be delayed inordinately. In respect of matters of licences and things of that sort people want promptitude, even though the answer is sometimes no. The worst thing that can happen is to keep an application in suspense for an indefinite period.

Perhaps this will place a burden on the minister, but I think it would be a much greater burden if it were placed on the governor in council. As hon. members know, there is always an opportunity during the consideration of the minister's estimates and motions to go into supply, to call the minister to account and answer questions. Certainly if we set up a committee with a better and more expert staff to deal with these transport problems there would be more careful scrutiny of these matters. I am all for it, as the hon. gentleman knows. I do not mean to prejudge what will happen when we reach clause 20, but I am all for the principle of having a committee of this house with expert assistance to keep these matters under scrutiny.

● (9:40 p.m.)

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to delay the committee too long, but in reading the explanation of this clause I notice that it says:

To provide for appeals to the minister in lieu of appeals to the governor in council—

So even if this can be done under the Aeronautics Act, that explanation led me astray. I say unequivocally that even if this is a change, I support what the minister just said. It takes so long to get a technical matter through cabinet, with 18 or 20 members, that it is not worth the time it takes in trying to improve the efficiency of a complicated operation such as the transportation business. I support the principle that we should have this type of efficiency, but at the same time I warn the minister in respect of the general principle contained in clause 20. I have been trying to persuade the minister to look favourably on our suggestions when we reach clause 20.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, what the hon. gentleman is saying is that it is much easier to behead one man than 20.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Chairman, I thought there was a difference of opinion between the hon. member for Qu'Appelle and the minister, but apparently there is not. As far as I see it, it is much easier to get the head of one minister on a platter than it is to get the heads of 20. However, I rose on another point which concerns me with respect to clause 18. I refer to the distinction drawn between the rights of an intervener under subclause 1 and subclause 2. As I read this clause, under subclause 1 an applicant or an intervener on an application to the commission for a licence may make an appeal to the minister for a final decision; but under subclause 2, which has to do with the