

*Supply—Transport*

going to look into the matter. I am just wondering if he realizes the principle that is involved. It is customary for people to say that they do not care about the money, that it is the principle of the thing. I am not going to use quite that trite observation at this time; but to tell the truth, I cannot quite imagine the former member for Comox-Alberni, with his rather legalistic turn of mind, not making a protest when he got clipped year after year on this particular point. Probably he did. Even so, probably the same thing happened to him as happened to me. The hon. member for Danforth spoke in stentorian tones to the effect that probably more of us should pay our own way. But I can just imagine the squeals that he would make if, every week end when he went home—sometimes perhaps on Thursday night, probably more often late on Friday night—

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** No, not the hon. member for Danforth.

**Mr. Gibson:** —if he had to pay some sum of money apart from what every other member of parliament pays. In those circumstances I am certain he would have supported the argument I made this afternoon. I am curious. This is an item for repair, operation and maintenance of official railway cars. Suppose the minister paid us a visit in British Columbia, and that he arrived at Vancouver. Suppose that someone suggested that the salmon was biting over in Campbell river and that he might like to take his car over there. Would he, as a matter of right, get transportation of his car to the island if he so requested? I am quite sure that he probably would not ask for it. But would he not have a right to do that?

**Mr. Chevrier:** The answer is no.

**Mr. Gibson:** I am sorry to persist but is the minister correct in that observation that the answer is no? Have you ever looked into it? Have you ever made a study of it?

**Mr. Chevrier:** I have not made a study of it, but apparently the hon. gentleman is not conversant with the act. As I tried to explain to him this afternoon, the act does not provide free transportation for members of parliament by steamship companies. The act simply provides for transportation on railways, and it provides also for the making of regulations governing the issuance of transportation by the board of transport commissioners. The board of transport commissioners have no jurisdiction over the steamship companies. For that reason I gave the hon. gentleman the answer that I did this afternoon. When he now asks me if I am sure of my answer when I say no to him, may I say that the reason for saying no so quickly

arises out of the answer which I gave this afternoon. It is evident that I could not move a private car to the island without paying the cost of transportation on the steamship, unless the railway wanted to come forward and say, "Certainly take your car over; we will look after it."

**Mr. Gibson:** There are terminal rates from the island, of course.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Unless the steamship company wants to treat the member in the same way, I do not see how there is any authority; in fact, there is no authority under the act to provide for it.

**Mr. Gibson:** Of course my point was that probably the act should be amended. Could it be amended?

**Mr. Chevrier:** I suppose it could.

**Mr. Gibson:** Would you not think that, in equity to all members of parliament, it should be amended?

**Mr. Chevrier:** I do not think it should; no.

**Mr. Sinclair:** I should like to join my colleague on this matter mainly because some three or four years ago the two of us placed another issue on transportation before this house. As you will recall, it was the question of whether or not hon. members coming from their ridings to this house could travel by air under the statute in question. We had done some work on the matter and saw that in the House of Commons Act there was this provision for direct transportation. Those who live close to Ottawa felt that the train was good enough; but those coming from far out-of-the-way places felt that the intent of the people who framed the act was that we should have direct passage. I am extremely glad that in the end the Speaker, who was adjudicating on the matter, upheld our contention. I am perhaps in a little bit better position to raise the point which he originally made because in the Railway Act the clause to which he referred makes provision that members of parliament may travel as of right on the railways of Canada. I looked back in *Hansard* and found out that this was one of the few concessions that the railways gave in return for getting the many concessions that this country gave in the way of land rights, mineral rights and so on, to enable the construction of the railways to go ahead.

I think the intent was pretty clear, namely, that this was a concession to enable a member of parliament to come from his home to Ottawa as often as he wanted on the national railway systems, not the nationally owned system. And today that intent is certainly carried out, because those members