

the years and under which the Maritimes benefited, which system would have had to be thrown overboard if this section providing for equalization had remained in the bill without some provision for preserving the position of the Maritimes.

In the committee of the other house there were some very extensive discussions, and it was ultimately agreed that that position of the Maritimes should be preserved. Counsel for the Maritimes, after consultation with the counsel for Department of Transport and with counsel for the other provinces, suggested this amendment which appeared as paragraph (f) of subsection (4) of section 332A of the bill as it came to us. Now, it is true that, as stated by the senator from Toronto (Hon. Mr. Campbell), when our committee was considering paragraph (f) we got different views as to what the paragraph meant, and it is indeed possible that the amendment which he suggests does approach a little closer to what the Maritime provinces really want than does the very general language of paragraph (f) as it now stands. But I want to point out to the Senate that this paragraph has been agreed to after a great deal of consultation, and the interpretation placed upon it by the government was clearly expressed to our committee a day or so ago by the Minister. It may be that the paragraph is capable of a number of interpretations. I myself do not think so. It seems to me that what it does is perfectly clear, but I think it is fair to say that if there is doubt as to what the paragraph means the Board of Transport Commissioners will of course take into consideration the expressed intention of parliament in enacting the paragraph and will govern itself accordingly. It may be that the paragraph could have been better expressed. I do not propose to make any comparison between the paragraph as it now stands in the bill and the paragraph as proposed by my honourable friend, but from a practical point of view it seems to me that if his amendment carries it will throw the whole question back into the maelstrom of discussion, which in the other house has been completed, and which may keep us here, so far as I know, until after Christmas.

May I now give my own opinion as to just what paragraph (f) means as it stands in the bill? It is an opinion which I think I may fairly say was agreed to by a majority of the counsel who appeared before our committee. In the first place, section 332A (1) sets out the general policy of equalization of freight rates. Then subsection (4) provides some exceptions to that; and one of the exceptions, the one which we are

now discussing, is that the equalization provisions shall not apply to rates applicable to movements of freight traffic upon any of the lines of railway designated as the "Eastern lines" in the Maritimes Freight Rates Act. Well, if the equalization section of the bill does not apply to the eastern territory, then all that happens is that the Maritime provinces are thrown right back upon the discretion of the Board of Transport Commissioners. There is no statutory right given to them to have their Maritime groupings or arbitraries preserved, but under the section as it now stands the Board of Transport Commissioners has the power to preserve those. And, with all deference, I submit that even though the matter may not be expressed in this measure quite as clearly as it should be, we have to leave a great deal to the discretion and the competence of the Board of Transport Commissioners; and I for one do not fear, what my honourable friend from Toronto (Hon. Mr. Campbell) fears, that the Board will so conduct its affairs as to produce a great inequality of rates between the Maritimes and the rest of the country. For myself, I am satisfied to accept the subsection as it now stands.

Hon. Norman P. Lambert: Honourable senators, with reference to the suggestion of an amendment to paragraph (f) of 332A (4), I think the crux is whether or not the Maritime Freight Rates Act as we have known it in the past, with its provision for a reduction of 20 per cent on the ordinary rate, is now being extended. In other words, the Act, as I understand it, provides that goods may be shipped from the Maritimes westward to Levis, and in some cases farther west, at a reduced rate.

There was a difference of opinion between Mr. Knowles and the learned counsel who appeared before the committee as to the effect of paragraph (f) on Ontario. I make no apology for referring to the Province of Ontario, for under this euphonious title of equalization everyone seems to be talking from the viewpoint of his own bailiwick, so to speak. If we are going to have equalization, let us have it.

Hon. Mr. Haig: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: If the passage of this measure means giving Maritime goods a special rate both east and west, beyond the limits provided by the Maritime Freight Rates Act, then I think we had better look at it more closely.

In the light of statements made by my colleague from Toronto (Hon. Mr. Campbell), if I am in order I should like to suggest the adjournment of the debate to permit the