

Transportation

My time is nearly up, and the only point I wanted to raise this afternoon was this: Despite all the work done on this bill and the hundreds of amendments proposed, some rejected, some accepted, we are now trying to go even further and bring in new amendments improve this, that or the other clause. But what the bill really needs is a complete re-examination of the principle upon which it is based. I suggest the government has taken the easy way out, and rather than plan for the benefit of the whole nation it has tried to find an easy way of avoiding the hard job of governing.

Mr. Nielsen: I was not a member of the transport committee when this bill was being considered, but having looked at the proceedings one of the most glaring omissions appears to be that there was no evidence at all adduced before the committee with respect to transportation by air, both of a private and of a commercial character. The second most glaring omission is that there does not appear to have been any evidence at all with respect to transportation in the northern areas of our country.

Sitting here listening to various members speak about transportation problems and the ramifications of the provisions of this bill, it struck me, as it often strikes me, that the members who sit here—I say this not unkindly—tend to confine their mental projections from St. John's, Newfoundland to Victoria on Vancouver Island.

• (6:30 p.m.)

They fail to appreciate the great need for north-south communication in this country, and for internal communication facilities above the sixtieth parallel as well as in the northern portions of provinces. The only reference in some 3,000 pages of testimony that I can find to air transport is that contained in a brief submitted by the Canadian Pacific. At pages 31 and 32 of the brief, they refer to a legitimate complaint not dealt with by the bill before us. The complaint should be dealt with by placing Air Canada under the same authority that other carriers are placed under. The bill before us brings transport by air, as the Canadian Pacific brief points out—to which the Aeronautics Act applies—under the jurisdiction of the new Canadian commission. The Aeronautics Act applies equally to all carriers except Air Canada. On an application for a licence Air Canada need not establish that the service is and will be required for the present and future public convenience and

[Mr. Saltzman.]

necessity. Its licence cannot be made the subject of the controls and conditions applied to licences granted to other carriers. In effect, the Governor in Council is the individual, with the Minister of Transport—not the Air Transport Board—controlling the domestic routes operated by Air Canada and the conditions under which they shall be operated.

Once Air Canada has made an agreement under section 15 or 24 of the Trans-Canada Air Lines Act with the Minister of Transport, it can make application to the board and the board is required to grant to Air Canada a licence under such terms and subject to such conditions as will enable Air Canada to perform the agreement. It seems to me that Canadian Pacific makes a valid point in its brief to the transport committee. The bill should direct itself to matters such as I have mentioned rather than dealing, as it does, with amending the Aeronautics Act for purposes of bringing dry leases on aircraft under the control of the board.

I, too, am fearful of the tremendous power to be given to this new commission with respect to one of the most vital segments of our country's economy. The Minister of Transport said he was very much in favour of the kind of parliamentary control suggested by the hon. member for Peace River, and the amendment the hon. member proposed yesterday. I was happy to hear what was said. The government is becoming more and more complex as the world takes on the complexities of the space age. This is no excuse to carve out of segments of public affairs concerning the people as a whole, great chunks of administrative authority and turning them over to what inevitably must become bureaucratic control. There are many shortcomings adopted in the methods of the Air Transport Board in dealing with the myriads of questions coming before it, with the only appeal being to the minister. Regardless of how valid an application might be for the beginning of a commercial air service, for instance, there is no appeal from the decision of the Air Transport Board. Almost invariably, the board bases its decision on evidence taken at public hearings before an individual who is not even a member of the board.

Counsel or assistant counsel hold hearings which are sometimes of great length, listening to volumes of evidence as to the public interest. Then, because of the routine adopted with respect to the internal management of the