

who compose them, it is but natural to expect that these boards will have a strong inclination to remove themselves from public participation and that they will become intolerant of criticism and opposition. All too often they exercise control without much real appreciation of the consequences which will follow from their actions. All too often the people become mere cogs in the machine, nothing but statistics. I think there is a line in Shakespeare about man "dressed in a little brief authority, most ignorant of what he's most assured" which is applicable to so many of these crown corporations and boards.

This bill, and the establishment of the commission, constitute a tacit admission by the government that it is unable to cope with the problems of transportation, and that the rights of parliament in this field, exercised by hon. members on behalf of their constituents, are to be restricted.

Once this bill has been passed, and once the commission has been established, parliament will have no effective way of dealing with the issues involved. We shall be limited to asking questions or to examining estimates. Too often we shall be met with a bland assertion by the minister responsible that these matters will be referred to the board or to the corporation.

I am not prepared to accept such a situation, having in mind the tremendous power which could be exercised by the transport commission. I suggest there is a way in which we in this house would be placed in a position of authority without in any way curtailing the freedom which the commission must enjoy. I have an amendment to put forward. I do not propose to move it at this point, though it might well be moved as clause 1(a). I think it might better be moved as a new paragraph 28(a). This is the clause dealing with the powers and authority of the board. Since this involves what I believe to be a new concept, I intend to read it. I have some copies here in French and in English.

● (6:50 p.m.)

On this basis the government might have some opportunity to consider this and, by the time the amendment is formally moved at a later date, to come to some conclusion. Here is the amendment which I propose to move at the appropriate time, and which I propose will be a new clause 28(a):

That, the following clause be added:

(1) As soon as practical after the commencement of the first session of each parliament, in any event not more than fifteen days after the commencement of the said session, a committee of nine members of the House of Commons (to be known as

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The National Transport Act Committee) shall be appointed for the duration of such parliament according to the practice of this house with reference to the appointment of members to serve on standing committees.

(2) There shall be a chairman and a vice-chairman of the committee who shall be elected by the members from time to time provided however that the chairman shall be a member of the opposition.

(3) Save where otherwise provided herein the general practice as established by the standing orders shall prevail with regard to the meetings and acts of the said committee.

(4) The powers and duties of the committee are
(a) to examine the annual report made to the Governor-in-Council by the commission—

Which I think is made under clause 20.

—and to report to the house with such comments as it thinks fit any items or matters referred to in this report; and

(b) to inquire into any question which is referred to it by the House of Commons and to report to the house upon that question.

(5) The committee may, and at the request of the witness giving evidence shall, take in private evidence whether oral or documentary which in the opinion of the committee relates to a secret or confidential matter.

(6) Where at the request of a witness evidence is taken by the committee in private the committee or member shall not, without the consent in writing of the witness, disclose or publish the whole or part of the evidence.

(7) Every person competent to give evidence touching any matter under discussion in the committee shall be a compellable witness.

(8) A person who gives evidence before the committee shall not without just cause (proof whereof shall lie upon him) refuse

(a) to be sworn or make a statement;
(b) to answer a question put to him by the committee or member thereof; or
(c) to produce any document which is required by the committee to produce.

I would have added to that a provision that the committee shall have made available to it such expert and other assistance as may be required in order properly to perform its function. However, I realize such an amendment would not be in order because it involves the expenditure of money, but I hope if the government sees fit to follow along the lines I have suggested in this amendment it will see this is done. Without help of this kind, of course, a standing committee of this nature would not be able to function and perform a service.

I said this is novel in concept, although it is used in one or two other Commonwealth countries. This is a statutory committee. It does not draw its authority *per se* from the house but from an act of parliament, in this case the bill which is before us. There are terms of reference. Its powers under the terms