

to the board, based on national policy, that as far as possible the board shall enforce equality in respect of freight rates.

Make no mistake about it, these amendments do not solve the question. We shall have interminable arguments before the Board of Transport Commissioners for the next several years when they are considering this matter; and while, unlike my friend the leader of the opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) I do not care to enter the realm of prophecy, I agree with him that this bill does not solve the question, that it cannot fairly be described as a measure to equalize freight rates across Canada, that it does not equalize freight rates, and that under the powers conferred through these amendments the Board of Transport Commissioners cannot equalize freight rates. Why then should it be called a measure for the equalization of freight rates? We shall continue, no doubt, to have the same sort of controversies before the Board of Transport Commissioners as we have had in the past, but because this amendment of section 332B does give a little more latitude to the Board of Transport Commissioners, I am going to support it. It may justify only a slender hope, but at any rate it is a move in the right direction.

Hon. J. Wesley Stambaugh: I am going to try to answer some of the questions that have been asked in this discussion. I believe the honourable senator from De Lorimier (Hon. Mr. Vien) inquired why we had not asked for the Spokane rate, which would be 100 per cent equalization. Alberta's representatives did ask for it, but the royal commission did not accept their views; why, I do not know.

I am prepared to admit that the present proposal is not equalization, but at least it is a step in that direction, and it does not prohibit the Board of Transport Commissioners from equalizing freight rates. It merely sets a ceiling, a maximum. It is possible that the reason the Spokane rate was not accepted was a desire to please Winnipeg. The Winnipeg representatives seem to feel rather keenly that they are losing an advantage they have had for years, but at the same time we have been to some extent at a disadvantage. The one-and-one-third rate will give us something we have not had, and the rate to Winnipeg will not be raised, but our rates on transcontinental freight will be lowered.

The honourable leader of the opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) said he thought that to pass on freight rates was beyond the powers of parliament. I would suggest, if that

is so, that is the reason the royal commission was appointed. Let us accept its recommendations without amendment. I think the commission was a very capable body, and it spent a lot of time on this matter. The leader of the opposition prophesies that the transcontinental rates will go up. The solicitor for the Canadian National Railways does not think they will. I do not intend to enter the realm of prophecy by predicting whether they will be increased or not; I am prepared to accept counsel's opinion on this point.

This bill is not limited, and the board can do as it likes about equalization. What this amendment really does is to throw the whole case as regards the one and one-third rate right back in the lap of the Board of Transport Commissioners. As I stated before, the solicitor for the C.N.R. said that they have no objection to the original wording of the bill. He did not say that we need this amendment; but if it passes you can expect the C.P.R. to camp right on the doorstep of the board to get the rate raised on this or that commodity. On the other hand, if we turn down this amendment and pass the original bill, we will take that load off the shoulders of the board in the same manner as we did when we made the Maritime rates mandatory.

The royal commission, which recommended the clause in the original bill was composed of men picked because of their special fitness for the position. The chairman is especially well known for his experience and ability. The commission studied 150 briefs prepared by groups of businessmen right across Canada. Sittings were held in every province. The commission also had the advice of counsel from eight provinces, counsel for the railroads, as well as numerous independent counsel representing the various associations which presented briefs. I want to say that if the counsel from the other provinces were of the same calibre as those from Alberta, they were indeed topnotchers. The royal commission had the best advice obtainable; it spent months studying these rates from all angles; so surely I will be pardoned if I say I would rather take the advice of the commission than that of some honourable senators here who have not had nearly as much experience or chance to study this question as had the members of the royal commission.

Alberta has been discriminated against in the matter of freight rates more than any other province. We pay more freight on the products we ship out as well as on the products shipped in. It would appear that the leader of the opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) is opposing this one and one-third rate because it appears that on some articles