

Transportation

and keep it here. The subamendment contained the exact words that are in this amendment, "without prejudice to the right to proceed with the motion for second reading." As I say, the present Speaker, when Deputy Speaker, ruled the subamendment out of order. In those days we could appeal the Speaker's ruling, which I am glad we cannot do now. An appeal was taken and the house sustained that ruling. I suggest this precedent is more relevant than precedents in the British parliament in the eighties of the last century.

Mr. Thomas (Middlesex West): If I may say a word on the point of order, I should like to stress the view that was expressed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. This appeals to him as a sensible amendment. It does not seek to stall the bill or destroy it. All that is sought here is further information. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the members of this house will be in a better position to vote on second reading, which is a very important stage in our procedure. If we vote for second reading we accept the bill in principle. I understand that it then goes to a committee for consideration, but when we accept this bill on second reading we have committed ourselves irrevocably to the processing of the bill.

It is true that we can vote against it on third reading, but we are going rather far in giving it second reading. There are serious questions in the minds of many members concerning some features of the bill. Generally speaking, we are in favour of a national transportation policy. However, I know that some members have grave doubts about the advisability of certain features of this bill. If the bill were sent to a committee before second reading I am sure that the information that would be brought forth would be of great value to every member of this house in reaching a conclusion on second reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Perhaps the Chair is in a position now to render a ruling on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Middlesex West. I should like to thank the hon. members who have given me advice and referred me to certain citations. I recognize, of course, the difficulty that faces us when we read Standing Order 77 which says that no bill can be committed without being read a second time. I recognize the difficulty in discerning the difference between the bill itself and the subject matter of the bill. Whatever personal views I may have about how a

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

difficult bill of this nature should be handled by this house, the Chair is faced with the problem of deciding whether or not the amendment is in order in accordance with our rules and our precedents.

May I first of all refer the house to that section of the amendment which reads:

—without prejudice to further proceeding to the said bill later this session—

I am not sure what this means. If it means that the bill is to remain on the order paper for second reading and at the same time the subject matter is to be referred to a committee, then we arrive at the position where we are trying to have it both ways. We arrive at a position similar to the one upon which Mr. Deputy Speaker Lamoureux ruled on September 28, 1964.

May I refer hon. members to citation 386 on page 278 of Beauchesne's fourth edition which reads:

On the second reading of a bill, the house may decide to refer the subject matter thereof to a commission although the bill could not be referred to a committee of the house before its second reading. (The subject matter of the bill and the bill itself are two different things).

Also from the same page I read the following:

This amendment was as much a declaration of policy as if it stated that the question of adjusting the railway rates on grain should be investigated by the Railway Board.

I would take it from this citation that referring the subject matter of this bill to a committee is a declaration of policy. Having said that, may I refer members to citation 393 which reads as follows:

An amendment purporting to approve the principle of a bill and at the same time enunciating a declaration of policy cannot be moved to the second reading.

It is for this reason that I declare the amendment out of order.

Mr. Pickersgill: I wonder if at this stage of the proceedings, in order to give a reasonable amount of notice to hon. members, I might move, pursuant to standing order 6(2), that the house continue to sit after six o'clock.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure just what is going to occur and I was waiting to see. I want to enter the debate on second reading. If you are going to do anything with respect to the proposal put forward by the