

*Transportation*

coast, to the Northwest Territories and another one is now being completed. Highways have been constructed.

• (6:40 p.m.)

These things have all stimulated the development of the northern part of Canada more than anything else could have done.

We are all impressed by the serious nature of our transportation problems in a country the size of Canada, its population situated as it is. In the future, the manner in which we paint on this great map the colours of economic and social development and settlement will make the difference between a great country in which to live and one in which problems will continue to plague us.

I do not intend to deal exhaustively with the bill at the present time, since the various clauses automatically suggest areas in which the appropriate discussions can take place. But I should like to say a word about one of the comments made by the minister when he told us that the C.P.R. had agreed to pay taxes despite the constitutional limitation on the power of municipalities to tax that company. Is it the intention of the C.P.R. to give up, by proper constitutional methods, its power in this regard, or will there simply be a series of undertakings by the company that these taxes will be paid? If the C.P.R. has a constitutional right to its freedom from taxation, the undertakings in this field are undertakings which can be revoked at any time. This is a matter to which the minister might give his attention.

While the minister is too sagacious to say so himself, the impression has been created that this bill contains the ultimate and perfect answer to all transportation problems, past, present and future. Certainly, a number of the news media have conveyed this suggestion. But let us not delude ourselves. From the time over 60 years ago when legislation was first introduced to set up what has now become the Board of Transport Commissioners, and even before that time, we have passed a number of acts of parliament, set up numerous royal commissions and inquiries; the Duncan Commission, the Duff Commission, several reports by Mr. Justice Turgeon, the Macpherson Royal Commission, inquiries instituted at the request of different governments by the Board of Transport Commissioners including the waybill analyses, yet there is still no true, equitable, lasting solution, nor even the appearance of one.

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Bearing in mind the vast size of this country, its small population and its disparate economic and social conditions in a changing world, I do not think a complete solution can be found, now or in the future.

This bill attempts to introduce into one measure provisions dealing with air transport, pipe line commodity transport and highway transport, the latter complicated by the spectacular growth of the metropolitan areas. The best anyone can say is that we have pulled back the curtain to peer out at the complex, tangled and ever-increasing possibilities of transportation stretched interminably into the future. At the moment, we are still lost in a labyrinth which seems to have no beginning and no ending.

I am reinforced in this view when I read the evidence of those who appeared before the standing committee. The puzzlement and misgivings expressed, the anxieties and concerns shown, and, above all, the widespread uncertainty as to the effect of most of the key clauses, suggest doubt about the answers and indicate that prospects for finding answers, if there are any, will lie with the super-commission to be set up.

If there is one thing which is common to the evidence given by the representatives of the agricultural and farm organizations, by representatives of all the various groups which appeared, it is doubt as to the effect of the various provisions made in this bill.

The transport commission to which I have referred will have to chart strange courses in unknown seas. The scope of the act is enormous, and equally vast will be the overriding supervisory authority of the transport commission. Let there be no doubt that if this bill is passed without any material change we shall have surrendered to those men who will compose the commission almost complete authority over a variety of subject matters in the field of transportation which so deeply affects every Canadian and every part of Canada.

In doing so we shall be following a general trend, not only in Canada but in other countries, to hack off large areas of our economic and social life and deliver them into the custody of some board or crown corporation set apart from the people and generally placed beyond the practical authority of parliament.

These tribunals tend to cultivate a cloistered existence, developing autocratic characteristics derived not only from the legislation itself but from their own innate character. Irrespective of the personality of the people