

National Transportation Act, 1986

gasoline taxes—and the railroads who own their own roadbeds and are forced to pay for that cost. On the other hand railways do get substantial sums of money from the federal coffers to provide services that Parliament has deemed to be appropriate.

• (1610)

I would encourage my colleagues on the other side of the House to give serious consideration to this amendment which would provide fairness and to support it. Those are my comments on this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, I rise simply to support the motion put forward by my colleague for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

In keeping with the spirit of good will and co-operation that pervades the discussion of the Bill, I will simply express my support for the motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 9 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 114(11), the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The next motion to be dealt with is Motion No. 12 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West) moved:

Motion No. 12.

That Bill C-18, be amended by deleting Clause 8.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Motion No. 12 moves that Clause 8 be deleted from the Bill. If my colleagues will read Clause 8, they will note that it allows for the appointment of temporary members to the new transportation agency on terms and conditions laid out by the Governor in Council, and any temporary member so appointed shall carry out such duties as

may be assigned, and the next paragraph says that there will be not more than six of them.

The only reason temporary members of the agency should be appointed is to fill a vacancy. If a commissioner of the agency becomes ill or must take an extended leave of absence, it would be justifiable to appoint a temporary member to fill that vacant position, even if it is only for a few months or a few weeks. However, to simply be able to appoint six temporary members in addition to those already appointed for a three, five or seven-year term smacks to me of a way of giving handouts to friends. More seriously, it raises the spectre of having six temporary members appointed in order to stack the deck for special purposes. In a particular issue in a particular part of the country, six temporary members may be appointed, all of whom are known to be on one side or the other of the issue, to hear about it and make a judgment on it. I am not suggesting that the Government would do that, but the fact that the possibility exists should cause everyone to have second thoughts about that clause.

The clause is entirely unnecessary. The Governor in Council may appoint people to fill vacancies in any event without this clause being in the Bill. I submit that the provision is very risky and is fraught with danger. It leaves the Government open to a criticism and suspicion that could turn out to be well justified. I submit that at this time, the Government does not need any more of that. Whether the criticism is justified or not, why would the Government deliberately leave itself open to that kind of suspicion? I would urge that government Members agree that the clause be withdrawn because it is unnecessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 12 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 114(11), the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.