

Hon. Mr. Isnor: I pause at this time to compliment the Deputy Leader of the Government on the very able manner in which he outlined this bill. He gave us a wonderful background which made it ever so much easier for us to follow the bill, for it is a voluminous document and covers a lot of ground. I know that we all appreciate the homework and the very fine manner in which he presented the main features of this bill.

Coming as I do from the Maritimes, I naturally must speak not so much of the railway angle but rather of the effect that it is going to have on traffic in general. This is not a railway bill, as has been emphasized time and again by various speakers, but is rather a transport policy bill designed to cover all phases of transportation, namely, by rail, air, water, truck, and even pipe lines.

The competition phase of the others has been emphasized. We in the Maritimes do not enjoy the competition which they enjoy and have in central Canada, and for that reason I am just wondering what is going to happen to the rates. Naturally, a person in business, if he has very keen competition, is going to be guided to a certain extent by the prices offered by his competitors. In the case of Ontario and Quebec it is particularly true that they have a system of transportation by truck. The railways naturally will be interested in comparing their rates, and of course will be so guided.

We in the eastern section of Canada have not the same form of competition, and I am just wondering what effect that fact might have on these 17 men on the commission who will be obliged to decide whether an increase in the rates is warranted.

Honourable senators, like others, I had misgivings at first about this bill. I wondered what effect it would have on my own section of the country. Illustrations have already been given of the costs of production and manufacturing in the Maritimes. Senator Phillips and Senator Burchill spoke on these questions. I remember one manufacturer of coffee remarking to me, "Do you realize that we pay 65 per cent of the cost of the product on freight rates?" He went on to point out that we pay to bring the glass jar from central Canada to Halifax, where we fill it with the best brand of coffee made in Canada and then ship it back again, and that the cost involved in this represents 65 per cent of the total cost of the product. I have remembered his remarks since then because they brought home to me the effect of the transportation charges on the railways.

I was very much interested in what the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Brooks) had to say, and I was very pleased to hear that he approved of the bill. I too approve of the bill. I think if properly implemented and if adequate consideration is given to its details, it will work for the interests of all concerned. However, as I said a moment ago, this measure involves a transportation policy and not just a railways policy. The users of transportation require a healthy and efficient transport system, free to compete and to be paid for by the users. I think Bill C-231 will implement this idea as well as the recommendations contained in the MacPherson Report.

Reference has been made to the greater use of pipe line transportation for solids. Serious consideration should be given to this matter. Sulphur, potash, wood chips, iron ore as well as wheat shipments could possibly be moved by this means in the future.

Honourable senators, one of my concerns since the bill was first introduced has been the effect it will have on the Port of Halifax. We all realize that the federal Government has a larger capital investment in the National Harbours Board, but this has not been talked about to date to any extent. I mention it because it is something which should not be overlooked. While the St. Lawrence ports will no doubt continue to be used by interested parties, for the sake of those who now make their living on the waterfront I hope that the ports of Halifax and Saint John will continue to be used to the greatest possible extent, particularly in the winter season.

May I at this juncture refer to Halifax as being perhaps the safest year-round shipping port in the whole of Canada. I think that fact is generally recognized. It has a depth of 70 feet, which enables the largest ships to enter the port, dock, turn around and go out again without the slightest danger.

In this connection I would mention that yesterday the Halifax press carried an item which stated that a \$60,000 report by a New York consulting firm is now being studied in Halifax in respect to the possibility of developing the Port of Halifax as the terminal for giant bulk cargo vessels, such as I believe will be in use in future years. These ships are getting larger and larger, and for that reason I look to greater possible use of the Port of Halifax.

I might also make a passing reference to freight rates, which have increased 157 per cent in twelve years. But they have increased