

*Canada Ports Corporation Act*

and I will do what I can to facilitate that. However, the minister had better go with open eyes to the committee because many of my colleagues are very disturbed about this bill, so am I, and for the next few minutes I will put forward a few reasons why I am disturbed.

This is not the first time we have seen this bill. I hope it is the last, but it is not the first. We saw it in 1977 as Bill C-61, again in 1977 as Bill C-6 and in March of 1979 as Bill C-50. All those bills died on the Order Paper.

We have serious reservations in probably 13 areas of this bill. Many of these reservations are well known to the minister and well known to his officials. They are well known to the members of the Standing Committee on Transport. I am hopeful that in committee many of these minor difficulties can be dealt with, and dealt with efficiently, by way of amendment. One or two of them may be viewed as substantive, but they are not substantive in intent.

Our first serious reservation about this bill stems from the fact that it is predicated in part upon Crown corporations legislation which we have not seen. When the former minister of transport, the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), introduced this matter, it was done in a manner consistent with proposals in a Crown corporations bill. We do not have that bill in front of us, Mr. Speaker. We have not seen the government's white paper or its green paper on the Crown Corporations Act. That is what we are setting up—Crown corporations with 20 subsidiaries. At this time we do not know the government's intention with respect to Crown corporations. It is absurd of the government House leader to ask us to give this matter second reading, put it through committee stage, report stage and third reading between noon and four o'clock on a Friday afternoon! I know he has problems, but that is not our fault. We tried to help the minister, but it is an affront to us that he did not deal with the Crown Corporations Act. He did not give us any indication how the bill will affect the government's intentions in that regard.

● (2140)

We support the principles of the bill that there is a need for efficiency, that there must be co-ordination with other transport modes, that there must be accessibility to users in order to develop an import-export trade.

The minister says that autonomy will be expanded. I believe that it may be enhanced slightly. When you have to refer to five different authorities in order to get something done, how does that expand autonomy? The matter has to be referred to the minister, to the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) to the governor in council, to the bylaws of the local port corporation and to the parent corporation, that means from five to six different levels of approval before something can be done that is regarded as necessary by those charged with the responsibility of administering an efficient and well organized port.

The minister will be hearing from my colleagues representing the Vancouver area who will speak about the long sticky fingers of Treasury Board. There is reference to "excess moneys". What does that mean? We have been told that there

will be different limits, and of course we realize that the limits of 1936 are not applicable to 1982. We have not been told what the limits will be, however. During this debate we will ask the minister for an undertaking that at committee stage, if not before, he will reveal the four or five parts of the authority that deal with matters such as financial limits so that we can see all the bylaws. The minister is very good to the House in that respect as a rule. Transport officials, not only under this minister but under ministers before him are open and allow members on all sides access to schedules and rules and regulations that flow from these things at committee stage so that we can understand what is going on. The sooner we have those, the better we will understand how serious the minister and the government is about autonomy.

The matter of equity between ports also concerns us. Of course the borrowing authority for the Port of Vancouver must be different from that for the port of Chicoutimi. They are two different worlds. But we do not know what the formula will be. It will have to treat Halifax, St. John's, Prince Rupert, Montreal and Quebec City equitably, yet it will have to be different. I hope the minister will let us in on his secret so that we can help him.

I want the minister to understand clearly what our concerns are. On a number of occasions in committee he indicated to us that he considered the tax levied on the marine transportation industry with respect to fuel for vessels leaving Canada, to be somewhat inequitable. But he did not do anything about it, apparently, although I am sure he tried. It is not good enough for the minister to say that such and such is autonomy; we want to see it in writing. We do not trust the President of the Treasury Board and I do not want to rely on the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen). Look at the mess he has got this country into! Does the minister expect members of the opposition to take his word for it? He should not stretch our credulity too far. Were he the only one standing between the governor in council and port corporations, then that might be an interesting proposition for the entire port community to consider. It would have been interesting for us and it would have made a basis for autonomy much faster than the four or five levels that the bill provides for, but the minister should not stretch our imagination too far. He should not make us reach too far beyond our capability to help him.

The minister knows that the majority of any entity, business or corporate, public or private, are governed to a large degree by the form and type of their incorporation, their powers and sources of finance. How autonomous can a local port be when its entire existence is to be determined by a Crown corporation whose entire existence, in turn, depends on the whim of the government? That is not a rhetorical question, Mr. Speaker. There is mention of the LPC, the CPC, the LAC—we have lance corporals in the air force and we have Canadian Pacific. Could we not call these the Halifax port corporation, the Vancouver port corporation, the Montreal port corporation? Can we get away from that and get into some useful and appropriate designations? This sounds as if we have given