

*Railway Act*

It is quite true, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure we are all aware of this, that during the days of the robber barons in the United States, that country passed legislation to control the giant enterprises. We in Canada, as well, have passed legislation to control the greed of some of these businesses. I refer for example to the Combines Investigation Act. Today we have legislation and other organizations that tend to offset any privileges or advantages that big business had in our economic structure. I am thinking here of the trade unions. Under our legislation businesses are forced to negotiate with the trade unions. The government provides for arbitration of disputes. When wage levels are arrived at, the wealth of the company is one of the factors that is taken into consideration. I should like to say here, Mr. Speaker, that I, like many other people, am in favour of a square deal for the labouring man as well as for the businessman. Labour should receive a fair return for services rendered, and the businessman who has a lot at stake must receive a fair return for his investment.

• (5:50 p.m.)

If in our future society we are going to continue to place regulations and many additional requirements upon businesses, we are going to discourage smaller business enterprises and this will speed up the process of driving small business enterprises into the hands of bigger businesses. Some room must be left in this country to encourage initiative in private enterprise if we are going to retain a reasonable amount of competition. Otherwise a greater measure of legislation will be necessary to control the giants. Canada is a young country; let Canadians have the opportunity to build it. You cannot take away initiative and discourage ambition and expect this country to grow and to develop.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, these transportation and communications enterprises which are mentioned have to report to the Board of Transport Commissioners. In this way their business operations are reviewed in a fair and independent light, and they must answer for any irregularities. The transportation bill that has been introduced in this house and agreed to in principle provides for the setting up of a national regulatory body. Are we going to question this new body before it even has a chance to start its work or to prove itself?

We have in this house now a committees system that gives members considerable opportunity to air grievances. The order paper

[Mr. Hopkins.]

allows members to submit questions to appropriate departments. As hon. members in this chamber know, committee work is already quite onerous and if we intend to load committees down with work which is already being done by some other body, the committees system may very well be damaged.

I have however no complaint about bringing giant corporations such as the C.P.R. before a committee. If any of the enterprises mentioned in Bill No. C-218 do not provide service, they are investigated. If there are complaints concerning safety factors, these complaints are investigated. If there are complaints about inefficiencies, these enterprises have to answer to the Board of Transport Commissioners. Are we in parliament going to set up a regulatory body, and then regulate the regulatory body that is responsible for enforcing the regulations? When there are inefficiencies in the new board, this parliament can complain about them; but at least we should give the new national regulatory body a chance to prove itself. Let us have efficient services, fair play to all parties and have controls where necessary; but let us not destroy initiative and the spirit of challenge of the Canadian people. The point in the bill, Mr. Speaker, concerning a particular giant corporation might be very well taken, but I should not like to see this measure applied to all when we have other means of control.

**Mr. J. A. Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, this has been something of a freewheeling debate, particularly the contribution made by the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Woolliams). It provided him with an opportunity to speak on his pet subjects, the Canadian Pacific Railway and national parks. Obviously the hon. member for Bow River either has not spent too much time in the house this session or has not been reading the reports of the committee on transportation and communications. If he had, he certainly would have known that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company has quite willingly come before a committee of the house. Indeed, if I recall the statement of the president correctly, he said he would be happy to appear at any time to answer the charges that had been made by members of parliament and others about whether or not they have lived up to their commitment to Canada in respect of their contract to build a trans-continental railway.