

Railway Act

Mr. Chevrier: Yes. Thank you for bringing that to my attention. That is a fact. It is not the same as in the bill. It is the same as the motion made in the committee, which we have adopted. It provides for the salary of the chief commissioner to be the same as that of the president of the exchequer court. It provides for the salary of the assistant chief to be \$14,000, that of the deputy chief \$13,000 and that of each of the commissioners \$12,000. Section 2, as contained in the amendment now before hon. members, deals with the office of the present chief commissioner, and I think that needs no explanation. It is clearly set out in subsections (a), (b) and (c) what the intention is. Section 3 provides that sections 1 and 2 of the act shall come into force on the first day of January, 1952.

Mr. Knowles: On the question of form, I understand then that the subject matter of what is comprised in sections 1, 2 and 3 of the printed bill is all being compressed, with some changes and additions, into the new section 1.

Mr. Chevrier: That is right.

Mr. Knowles: And that there are new sections 2 and 3.

Mr. Chevrier: That is right.

Mr. Green: We have not had very long to consider these changes in the first three sections of the bill, and I should like to take the opportunity of making a few general remarks with regard to it, as is the custom on the first section of a bill. Perhaps that will give other members a chance to review these amendments that are to be made. I am rather sorry the minister did not say something concerning the work of the committee, and with reference to the bill as it has come back from the committee.

Those members of the house who, like myself, were fortunate enough to be members of the special committee on railway legislation found the work extremely interesting, and I hope it will be beneficial to the country. I must admit that we are hardly qualified as experts by reason of the fact that we have been sitting as members of the committee for a couple of weeks, but at least we do know a little more than we knew before the committee started to sit. Not many witnesses appeared before the committee. There were two from the Canadian Pacific Railway and there was one spokesman for the Canadian National Railways, although of course other officials of that railway were present and also other officials of the Canadian Pacific. I think it was unfortunate that the Canadian National was not allowed to take a more active part in the work of the committee.

The Canadian Pacific had to make all the submissions against the bill, and of course in the process got a certain amount of kicking around. I would have appreciated having similar comments from the spokesman for the Canadian National Railways, but perhaps he was handicapped by the minister.

Mr. Chevrier: Not in the slightest.

Mr. Green: One got the impression that he had the wraps on, and I thought perhaps the minister was responsible. However, there is no doubt that when it comes to the fixing of freight rates both the railways will be together. They have been in the habit of making applications in the name of the Railway Association of Canada, and I have no doubt they will continue to do so in applying for increases in rates.

Then we heard representatives from eight of the provinces; that is, all the provinces except Ontario and Quebec. These two provinces were not represented, I presume because they are not very interested in this bill. It is obvious that the shippers in those provinces are confident they are not going to pay very much higher freight rates than they are paying today. Ontario and Quebec were not represented, either, before the royal commission on transportation. The minister will correct me if I am wrong, but I believe those provinces did not make any representations to the Turgeon commission.

Mr. Blackmore: They always win.

Mr. Green: Well, in so far as freight rates are concerned they have been winning thus far and perhaps they will continue to do so.

There has been an impression abroad that this bill lays down some new national transportation policy. In the earlier debate I may have made a statement to that effect myself, but I believe we should make it absolutely clear that there is no such intention. The bill deals only with railway freight rates. There is no attempt at all to deal with rates by water, by air or by road, so that by no stretch of the imagination can it be considered a bill to bring in a national transportation policy.

Section 332A of the Railway Act does, however, proclaim what is called a national freight rates policy. Even that name gives a wrong impression, because if members will refer to the section, which is contained in section 7 of the bill, they will find that there are quite a few exceptions to this national freight rates policy. For example, all joint international rates between points in Canada and in the United States are excepted from this new policy; rates on export and import