

Transportation

However, it was also indicated that the second bill, this one dealing with transportation, was of great urgency and should be passed with great speed, and I think this was a little misleading. I was not the least bit surprised when I read in some column in one of the papers that the Minister of Transport had dreamed up an idea.

• (8:50 p.m.)

He considered that this would be a great opportunity, with the house meeting under urgent conditions, to compel or urge the House of Commons to pass in double quick time his pet bill—this one on transportation—and linking it up with the railway strike to give the idea across the country that the two bills went together, and that one could not pass without the other. Then the House of Commons, seized of this urgency, would immediately pass those bills, and the minister would be very happy.

We discovered after we assembled here, began to discuss the railway strike bill, and had a look at the present Bill No. C-231 dealing with transportation problems, that although initially it might pass before the House of Commons very, very quickly, nevertheless it would require weeks, if not months, of intensive study by way of committee before it would come back to the house for final approval. So the urgency of the second bill was not anything like as great as pointed out to us, or as we were given to believe before parliament assembled.

Relating that fact to my earlier remarks about the stimulating influence of the Minister of Transport on the House of Commons, one can understand why I examined very carefully the situation that confronted us. I think the article in one of the newspapers was fairly accurate when it said that this situation gave the minister an opportunity to get rapid consideration of a bill under what was almost a pretence that it was essential to do so at this time, because of the railway strike legislation.

We now know that even if this bill were passed very quickly at this stage, and considered by committee very quickly, it would not alter the financial position of the railways for the year 1966. We know from our experience here that the bill will not pass through all the stages very quickly, and it would be very unwise if it did, because ever so many organizations, in addition to the provincial governments, will wish to make representations.

[Mr. Churchill.]

During the course of his speech the other day the Minister of Transport told us this:

I like to think there is a sense of urgency about this legislation that has not existed at any time since the MacPherson report was received.

I consider that this is a spurious sense of urgency. The urgency has been present with the minister and his colleagues for over three years. Why the minister failed to act after he withdrew his railway legislation in 1964, until September of this year, escapes me. What was he doing for over two years with his transportation legislation? Quite a bit of the early work had been done by his predecessor, the present Minister of Public Works (Mr. McLraith), who was then minister of transport. Yet, well over two years elapsed before the minister was seized with a sense of urgency which happened to coincide with a railway strike and with a special session of parliament. This is the stimulating influence that this minister has on the House of Commons, and this is how he leads some people down the garden path.

Then, not content with that, when he was entertaining the House of Commons the other evening while speaking, he said something about hoping that there would be—and these are his words—

—a relatively brief general debate on second reading.

Earlier we had conceded a point for the minister, and had passed the resolution stage without debate. Not content with that he wanted a brief discussion on second reading.

We have reached the stage of what I now call instant legislation. Everything has to be done the day before yesterday, and I rise in protest against this attitude of mind which wants everything done before you have even time to consider it. If there is one bill which should not be classed as instant legislation, it is the bill presently before us. It has taken the government years to prepare it. It has taken the present minister over two years to get it ready. Its ramifications, as pointed out by many speakers, are profound and will affect our country for many years to come. This is not a bill which should be subjected to this new fangled idea of instant legislation.

Mr. Winkler: Will the hon. member permit a question? Is he not aware that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) this evening on the national broadcasting network blamed the