

Transportation

prefer the amendment to be drawn in a narrower form, he should not disregard it completely. In fact, the minister could bring in an amendment which might well fall under subsection (3) of new section 314D more appropriately. This subsection could provide for the commission reporting to the governor in council its findings with regard to any alteration or deviation in respect of a branch line which would disrupt employment. Under subsection 3 the commission could report to the governor in council.

● (4:20 p.m.)

I am suggesting this so that we may get on with the legislation. We on this side of the house have been trying to co-operate and to make some progress every day. Here we have a very important technical point. An amendment has been suggested and I am sure the hon. member who moved it would not object to the consideration of this amendment by the minister who could give it to his draftsmen to examine and perhaps make some changes to it if considered necessary or even include it in a clause which would allow the commission to report to the governor in council that compensation should be paid in case of the alteration or deviation of any branch line resulting in direct hardship to the employees or by reason of the exercise of seniority in the company.

All I am asking of the minister is that he should agree to stand this clause. We will be considering the transportation bill again tomorrow and in the intervening time this point can be studied very carefully in consultation with the draftsmen of the bill and the mover of the amendment. Certainly the amendment deserves consideration and perhaps the minister could work out something which would be agreeable to him. In a sense this amendment falls within the scope of the rationalization of railway lines. It does not broaden the financial aspect of the bill, particularly if the commission were to hear briefs, study the abandonment of branch lines or their rationalization and report to the governor in council that such and such were the conditions.

The minister has been in a very co-operative mood throughout the consideration of this legislation. I know that he wants to proceed with it as quickly as possible, as we do on this side of the house. I ask him to agree to have the clause stood for consideration for another day of the suggestion put forward in this amendment and to proceed at the present time with other clauses of the bill. I urge the minister to do this in order that we may make

[Mr. Horner (Acadia).]

some headway in the passage of this legislation.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, having listened to the debate I should like to support the proposed amendment. The value of debating clauses in the house is that it allows people to get information. Their attention is drawn to matters which they may have overlooked. Having listened to the debate I must say that I am impressed with the arguments which have been brought forward so far. Before the chairman rules on the validity of the amendment may I say that the suggestion which has been made recently that the amendment stand for study by the minister is a sensible one and is preferable to the more strict and formal method of ruling one way or another on the amendment. I do not know of any bill that has been brought before the house which has been subjected to so many amendments in the standing committee stage and now in committee of the whole. One more amendment will not delay the proceedings at all. In fact, if the minister is as wise as some people who do not know him as well as I do tend to think he is he would stand this amendment and perhaps modify it if he and his legal advisers think that it is drawn too broadly.

I was impressed with the argument that in the course of developing a national transportation policy our job is not solely to consider the economic strength or weakness of the railway corporations but also to consider the people who are employed by those corporations and without whose activities they would not be of much value. This amendment follows along the line of the suggestions made by Mr. Justice Freedman. Yesterday when we were talking about another section the minister was at pains to point out that a royal commission which had been appointed by the government of our party had made certain recommendations and that therefore we should be prepared to accept its findings. I myself have never taken that point of view with regard to royal commissions. However, here is the minister's chance to apply his own argument and accept the findings of the royal commission headed by Mr. Justice Freedman.

Undoubtedly this is a vital matter in so far as the employees of the railways are concerned. If automation or other changes throw them out of work unexpectedly, then every provision should be made to see that they will not suffer loss of employment. Their interests are of equal importance to us as the interests