

Mr. CHEVRIER: It came about because of representations which were made to the royal commission on transportation. Was it not one of those recommendations which were made by the Turgeon Royal Commission?

Mr. KIRK: That is right.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Representations were made by various groups in western Canada.

Mr. KIRK: About the so called bridge. That was my understanding.

Mr. FISHER: Back in the Turgeon report, in the opinion of Dr. Angus, there was a certain statement made with regard to the position of railway workers. It is to be found at the back of the book. It had to do with the railway workers and their wage position. Since then I gather that the board has made certain rulings, or advanced certain opinions, trying to relate the wages of the railway workers to the wages of the workers in the durable goods field.

Mr. KNOWLES: Not this board, but various conciliation boards have done it.

Mr. FISHER: I think this would be welcome at a later stage when we get certain briefs presented. We can leave it for the present. Perhaps the minister would be prepared to express some views as to how railway wage negotiations came into this picture, and the question of a subsidy.

Mr. HEES: I am not saying that railway wages do come into the picture. There was a freight rate ruling, and there was an award which was brought down by the Board of Transport Commissioners. It was appealed by eight provinces. We dealt with the appeal and we said we would take steps to alleviate the burden. The purpose of this bill is to do just that.

Mr. FISHER: Are you saying that anything which has to do with railway wages is irrelevant?

Mr. HEES: I am not saying anything at all. I am simply saying that we are dealing with this bill which is to assist the burden borne by consumers across Canada who pay the increased freight rates. That is what we are dealing with.

Mr. FISHER: Might I carry that a step further in saying that the Board of Transport Commissioners had a hearing in connection with this application of November 19, 1958, which was brought about, was it not, by an increase in wages?

Mr. HEES: Yes.

Mr. FISHER: Following the judgement of a conciliation board; and what the board did was simply to put into effect in its judgement the amount of money required by the railways to implement the judgment of the conciliation board.

Mr. HEES: That is right.

Mr. CHEVRIER: That is why I asked this question in the house: is this subsidy associated in any way with the wage increase?

Mr. HEES: The hon. member has already said that it is.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Yes; but I am asking you.

Mr. HEES: I would think it was obvious to everybody.

Mr. CHEVRIER: That it is?

Mr. HEES: Well, yes.

Mr. FISHER: Mr. Chevrier has already suggested some of the things that should be in the terms of reference of the royal commission, and I humbly suggest that this might be one.