

within easy reach of Ottawa, do not attend this debate in great number. So it is on an occasion like this that we find in the chamber and interested in the debate members such as the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard), on the shore of the Pacific, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), representing the greatest railway centre in Canada and the one from which a great deal of wheat is moved, the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) whose riding touches the shores of Vancouver Quadra in and out of which ships take wheat to the Far East, the hon. member for Malpeque (Mr. MacLean), the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) whose riding in Prince Edward Island is almost wholly dependent not only on the efficiency of Canadian National but on the ferry service which it operates, and the hon. member for Saint-Jean (Mr. Smith) who represents a railway centre in the province of Quebec.

When I first came to this chamber in 1963 the standing committee on transport was the first committee with which I had anything to do. I have very vivid recollections of going into that committee, sitting down in a seat to look at a committee of parliament for the first time and finding myself seated between Douglas Fisher on the one hand and the late Sherwood Rideout on the other, a railway man from New Brunswick. These two gentlemen were the rugged defenders of parliament against the ogre of that day, Donald Gordon. They were in the forefront of what for many years had been a great vendetta between the members of parliament interested in transportation on the one side and Canadian National Railways on the other. It was an interesting procedure to watch. Donald Gordon, the president of the railway, would come into the room and he would have with him a coterie of vice-presidents and officials, each of whom had a black bag in which there were sheaves of railway statistics. When he was asked a question he would say, "I will defer to Mr. Smith, vice-president of the railway," to the "vice-president of maintenance of ways"—or of whatever it happened to be—"and he will give you the information." Whereupon this gentleman would open up his black bag and we would be showered with railway statistics for the next half hour.

I do not suppose that in the history of parliament a better snow job was done on parliament than that which was done by Donald Gordon, and I don't suppose a better job was done of squaring up to a rugged man like Donald Gordon and tackling him at the parliamentary level than was done in those days by Douglas Fisher and Sherwood Rideout. This was a great introduction for me to the procedure of parliamentary committees. When I look back on it now I realize that Donald Gordon really showed us only the tip of his slipper pushed out from beneath the Pullman curtain, because we saw so very little of what went on behind.

As time went on, the committee became more sophisticated and its members much more knowledgeable about railway and transportation affairs generally and about the CNR and Air Canada in particular. Over those and the ensuing years we took part in such debates and in debate on the act setting up the Canadian Transport Commission. We listened to many experts and in fact became semi-experts ourselves. In addition to that, the practice grew in the House of Commons of letting committees

travel around the country in order to study what was going on. One of these committees which saw the country and discussed with people on their own ground the problems of transportation was the standing committee on transport. Over the years the committee has had many able chairmen, not the least of whom is the present chairman, the hon. member for LaSalle (Mr. Lessard). He is a fair and impartial chairman, very interested in the problems.

• (2020)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deachman: I believe members on all sides of the House respect him as a parliamentarian—

Mr. Horner: What is all this leading up to? Are you going to put him in the Senate?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): He is too good for that.

Mr. Deachman: I have not had an opportunity tonight to say how much the committee has benefited from the participation of the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) whose continuing interest in transportation has been over the years a highlight of the work of the committee. He suggests that the chairman of the committee should be sent to the Senate—

Mr. Horner: I did not suggest that. I rise on question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) rises on a question of privilege.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is attempting to—I do not want to use the word "twist" but he is attempting to mislead the House by his misinterpretation of the question I asked him under cover of flowery compliments paid to the chairman of the transportation committee. I posed the question—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please.

Mr. Horner: I am coming to my question of privilege. I posed the question, "What is going to happen next? Are you going to put him in the Senate?" I did not suggest that he should go. I am one who wants him to remain as chairman of the transportation committee. The hon. member and myself and most members of the Conservative party get along very well when that member is in the chair.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member for Crowfoot knows that he cannot take advantage of a question of privilege to seek the floor in this way.

Mr. Horner: He misinterpreted my remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): By using the Standing Orders and rules of the House the hon. member can gain the floor—

Mr. Horner: That was a bona fide question of privilege.