

Transportation

● (5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Deachman: Mr. Chairman, in dealing with whether or not the amendment to clause 74 meets the rules of the house some remarks were made by the hon. member for Medicine Hat in which he drew attention to the various items in the new clause 74 which were not a part of the original proposed section 329. I did not hear the hon. member refer specifically to proposed section 472 of clause 74. This particular section is not related to the old section 329 but refers specifically to the matter which I raised in connection with proposed section 328, subsection 2, in respect of domestic grain rates between prairie points and British Columbia.

There was discussion between me and the minister in respect of how the same provision could be maintained in the bill. I wanted to make sure that before the bill passed we had placed in the bill some arrangement whereby the problem facing the farmers of British Columbia could be adequately reviewed and the results of that review drawn to the attention of the cabinet for action.

My only purpose in rising at this moment is to protect the clause I have fought for in interviews with the minister and on the floor of this house, although the provision is not really associated with the Crowsnest rates but with domestic rates on grain into British Columbia. This is a problem which faces the farmers of British Columbia but does not face farmers in other parts of Canada. I simply want to be on record at this moment as indicating that this particular clause is specifically related to proposed section 328(2) which I believe has not been passed yet. I believe it will be voted upon eventually when clause 50 is brought before the committee to be tidied up.

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to speak too long on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Bow River. I did notice with interest the remarks made by the hon. member for Medicine Hat who tried to explain why, a few days after this party had shown him the action that should be taken to defend his people, he had weasled on the appropriate occasion but now wants to defend his action. This did not throw much light on the point of order.

I was amazed at the minister's smooth defence of the significance of the change in wording, since there is not much difference between the amendment and the proposed section we threw out last week. I had hoped the minister would entertain a question from

[Mr. Churchill.]

me but he declined to do so. One of the essential differences the minister mentioned between this amendment and the deleted section was that the deleted section contained an obligatory provision while the amendment does not. In other words, the old section we threw out required a review within three years while the amendment permits a review after two years.

In listening to the minister one might be led to believe that the members of this chamber are not in touch with the realities of life, are not supposed to know of the anxiety of the railways to open up the question of the Crowsnest rates. We are not supposed to know how anxious the railways are to use every device they can to get at these rates. We are not supposed to have listened to the debate on this question last week.

I was going to ask the minister, since there is no one in this house who has any doubt that given the slightest opportunity the railways will immediately make an application to review these rates, what he is suggesting in this amendment that is really new. He is suggesting an inevitable inquiry and therefore is saying that the huge difference between the amendment and the old section is the difference between mandatory and inevitable. I really believe it boils down to that, and if we are to be honest about it the minister's argument amounts to sophistry.

The second point the minister made was that this amendment is wider than the original section because it refers to other rates and not just the Crowsnest rates. It was pointed out earlier in the debate that clause 15, of course, covers other rates. Argument was advanced on whether the deleted section was really necessary in view of clause 15. I cannot, therefore, see much force in the minister's argument that the amendment broadens the old section, especially in view of the presence of clause 15. No one who has listened to the debate or to the minister's remarks could find any essential difference between what he said with reference to this amendment and what he said about the deleted section.

He has said that this provision could not be construed as an attack upon the Crowsnest rates and is only designed to have a look at the revenues and costs. This is precisely the argument he used all last week, that the provision was not an attack on the Crowsnest rates and did not open the door for an attack upon those rates. He was puzzled as to why members of the committee could not seem to understand his argument. He persisted in advancing it as though committee members