

National Transportation Act, 1986

place is discussions which take place between Hon. Members and the Table Officers. This eliminates a great deal of difficulty later when the Chair has to make a ruling. Therefore, I want to say, first of all, how much the Chair appreciates the respect for the process which all Hon. Members have shown and the co-operation they have given to the Table Officers.

Having said that, let me say that there has been in this particular case a great number of amendments. At least one Hon. Member may wish to say a few words before the Chair gives its ruling. This is to be looked upon as an exceptional circumstance, not a commonplace one. I will hear the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I want to say how much my colleagues and I appreciated your assistance and guidance as well as that of the Table Officers in arriving at decisions regarding the eligibility or propriety of the amendments.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that if you think this is bad, you should be happy you were not in the chair during the Crow rate debate because at that time 108 amendments had to be dealt with. However, we will not prolong the matter now as we did at that time.

I am compelled to make a general comment first, and I promise I shall be brief. In the situation of report stage, the Chair is in the position of having to select or not select certain motions as well as decide whether or not they are in order. It seems to me that the rules provide the Chair with a wide latitude in this process of selection. I believe, Sir, that the Chair initially thought that some 30 motions would not be selected and that another 11 motions were out of order.

I would like to pose the question: Is the Chair placing itself, and any future successors—and I hope there will not be any successors for many, many years—in a position whereby, for example, in a minority Parliament, the Chair is not selecting but being selective? Further, I want to submit that the Chair must surely take into account that when there is a significant lapse of time between the proceedings in a committee and report stage of a Bill, events and circumstances can occur which will mean a measure which may have been defeated or passed in the committee needs to be reconsidered.

I also submit that we must recognize that the House may want to reverse a decision of the committee, especially a decision which was negatived, because we cannot assume that the House will always agree with a decision of a committee and it should have the opportunity to disagree.

I would just like to say briefly that Motions Nos. 2, 6, 11, 13, 44, 45, 46 and 96, are all substantive. They are all of a quality and importance such that the House may want to reverse a decision of the committee. For example, Motion No. 2 goes to the main thrust and principle of the Bill. According to the legislation and to the Government itself safety standards are paramount. We submit that that is extremely important.

• (1120)

Motion No. 11 defines the perspective of people who will be appointed to the agency, but the Bill is silent on the matter. Those engaged in a transportation undertaking or business and those in manufacturing or distributing of transportation plant and equipment are eliminated from being a member of the agency. However, those who are shippers are left untouched. Their conflict is just as direct as that of those engaged in a transportation undertaking.

Motion No. 13 attempts to correct that by placing those who are shippers or receivers in the same category and, according to a subsequent clause, they would have 90 days to divest themselves of any interest as a shipper or receiver.

Motions Nos. 44, 45, and 46 add to the major thrust of the Bill by making a willingness to meet the highest possible standard of safety a condition of obtaining a licence. The Minister, the Government, and the legislation have made clear that there will not be any compromise in the area of safety and security. We are suggesting that those three amendments strengthen the main thrust of the legislation.

Motion No. 46 deals with northern air transport. The Bill shows the Government's intention to continue a regulated regime in the northern designated area where public convenience and necessity are to be applied as they are applied under current legislation. The amendment continues that basic requirement in the new regime.

Motion No. 96 is substantive, because the House and the committee have agreed to a five-year review. At issue is the principle in the Bill to stimulate economic activity and employment. Since the review was agreed to for a five-year period, and subsequently a one-year review was agreed to, the amendment seeks to include in the annual review the progress or lack thereof of a continuous activity in terms of stimulation of economic activity and employment.

Finally, I should like to make a brief remark about two of my amendments which Your Honour has indicated are out of order. I thank you for the opportunity to try to persuade you otherwise. In Motion No. 21 we only add an equally important interest group to an already long list of important groups in the Bill which should be permitted to appear, if they wished, before the agency. Employment and employees are mentioned in other places in the Bill. I submit that the motion does not go beyond the scope of the Bill because it is permissive. These people may appear as well as the others already listed. It does not depend upon any other amendment passed or negatived; it stands on its own. As I say, it does not go beyond the scope of the Bill and certainly does not require additional government expenditure. These people may appear if they wish and obviously the Bill only provides for the expenditure of money if a witness is summoned. However, if they appear voluntarily, they are not eligible for any compensation.

Turning to Motion No. 48, the Chair cannot assume that I was trying to change the designated geographic area to one based upon population. Since my amendment does not seek to