

Department of Transport Act

controller allocate cars on the basis of the farmer's choice. It is true that we have not done that at this time, because we do not think it is the responsibility of the transport controller to do that. At the present time that is a responsibility of the wheat board. The wheat board decides upon the allocation of cars. They, the C.C.F., do not like to criticize the wheat board because they know that criticism of that kind is not popular with the farmers, so instead of criticizing the body which today has the responsibility for the allocation of box cars they try to make out that that is the responsibility of the transport controller.

We are not entering into that kind of criticism at the present time. We are not criticizing the wheat board nor are we criticizing the transport controller, because he is not the one charged with that responsibility.

In so far as the question of whether or not box cars should be allocated on the basis of the farmer's choice is concerned, on every single occasion that a vote has been taken in this house this group has supported that principle. In order to bolster his false charge that we have not always taken that stand, what does the hon. member for Assiniboia do? He mentions one member of our group, the hon. member for Medicine Hat. The hon. member for Medicine Hat has never announced the agricultural policy of this group. That was always done by the late hon. member for Battle River, and since his death I have made such announcements for this group. When the hon. member says we have not always supported the allocation of box cars on the basis of the farmer's choice he is just not telling the truth.

Mr. Johnson (Kindersley): Mr. Chairman, I think what we should keep in mind is the resolution which is being discussed at the present time and the discussion which will provide us with some information on the bill which is to follow. I think it should be kept in mind that the tendency of the Liberal government in the past few years has been to scuttle the Canadian wheat board. We have another example of that showing up here.

The Canadian wheat board has stated that it does not want to be charged with the responsibility of allocating box cars at individual marketing points. The administration has restricted the field of activities of the transport controller in the way the Minister of Transport outlined this afternoon, with the result that the prodigious task of allocating box cars has been thrown into the laps of the Canadian wheat board who have stated in the past that they do not want that job. Their job is selling wheat. The Minister of Trade and Commerce told us that they were

[Mr. Quelch.]

not in the banking business and now we are told that they are not in the railroading business.

There is a tremendous field open for the transport controller. I do not think we can be satisfied with an appointed individual who receives no salary from the Department of Transport, who receives his salary of \$12,000 a year as a member of the board of grain commissioners. I feel that the job of transport controller is one to be taken seriously. The Department of Transport should assume more authority for the enforcement of the regulations. This is where we come into disagreement with the Social Credit party, who are quite content to let the present circumstances continue. They do not agree with us when we state that we are not getting a fair allocation of box cars among the marketing points. Since the transport controller has been allocating box cars at individual marketing points, perhaps in the past he has shown the members of the Social Credit group some favours and they do not want to get on his bad side.

Mr. Low: That is silly; that is childish.

An hon. Member: Pretty small.

Mr. Johnson (Kindersley): It is pretty childish for the transport controller to operate the way he does, because on the one hand we hear that he has no responsibility for the allocation of box cars to individual marketing points yet last year in the committee on agriculture and colonization he admitted he was quite ready to step in and correct situations which might develop.

The main thing I want the Minister of Transport to keep in mind is the criticisms we have offered of the present administration of the transport controller. There is a large field of endeavour which at present is vacant. If we were to appoint two or three transport controllers to handle this job of co-ordinating the rail movements the whole movement of grain would be more efficient, and we would finally achieve that principle which western farm organizations have been so desirous of having established even in the face of an adverse government. This government would be doing the farmers of all Canada a favour by bringing in a bill containing some of these features and making it truly operative.

Mr. Smith (Battle River-Camrose): Mr. Chairman, I should like to take a moment or two in further discussion of this resolution. Last evening I attempted to state in very brief terms the position of our group as far as this particular resolution is concerned. During the course of my remarks I tried in all sincerity to pay a compliment to the present transport controller. I did that knowing full well what I was doing. To my way