

*Department of Transport Act*

the paper about box car shortage—box car shortage—everytime I pick up the paper, but it is not fair to leave the thing—that there is a box car shortage.

I do not know whom to believe. Somebody in authority says there is a box-car shortage; somebody else says there is no box-car shortage. They are just given the run around. In the meantime thousands of producers in western Canada have been able to deliver what amounts to practically no grain in this current crop year as compared with what they might expect to deliver in a normal period.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** May I ask the hon. member a question?

**Mr. Argue:** Surely.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Is he aware that there is 80 million bushels of unused space in the country elevators of western Canada at this moment?

**Mr. Argue:** Now we are going to hear that from the minister. The fact remains that the situation to which I referred has not been brought about by snow, by bad roads, by weather or by an act of God. Manitoba has had far more snow than Saskatchewan; it has been a record in Manitoba. Yet the Manitoba points have much higher quotas, as I have already stated.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** You are dodging my question.

**Mr. Argue:** If the Minister of Trade and Commerce will equalize the quotas in the next two months, I assure him the farmers will take care of filling any elevator space there might be at individual marketing points. We would like to find out who has the authority to move the grain.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** On that point, I think the provinces are responsible for keeping their roads in shape so that deliveries may be made.

**Mr. Argue:** We heard that in Regina a few weeks ago. Now the Minister of Trade and Commerce implies that it is the provinces that are responsible for the fact that there are no quotas to speak of at 300 or 400 marketing points in Saskatchewan and there are high quotas at other marketing points. I think it is time the Minister of Trade and Commerce went out to Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba and saw what the conditions are, instead of this loose talk about opening roads. There is not enough equipment in Saskatchewan or Manitoba or Alberta to open ten to 20 per cent of the roads when they are blocked with a record snowfall as they were a few weeks ago.

[Mr. Argue.]

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Are we to blame the transport controller for that?

**An hon. Member:** You cannot have it both ways.

**Mr. Argue:** No one is endeavouring to blame anyone for the weather, but neither can the Minister of Trade and Commerce blame the weather for the bad distribution of box cars. The weather has nothing to do with it. I have never heard of the weatherman ordering the distribution of box cars yet. It is a matter of the government dividing the authority three ways and then giving parliament and the farmers the run-around. The transport controller has ample authority but the transport controller does not want to use it. On March 9 he gave evidence before a special select committee of the Saskatchewan legislature and in the transcript of his evidence I find that he said this:

Now, gentlemen, there is only one authority to move grain in Canada, and that is the Canadian wheat board.

Mr. Milner has all the authority parliament can give him, but he says the power rests with the Canadian wheat board. Donald Gordon of the C.N.R. blames the Canadian wheat board. Apparently there is a conspiracy to blame everything on the Canadian wheat board. The wheat board has by far the most efficient people to be found in the administration of the Department of Trade and Commerce. I have had certain critical things to say about the wheat board in the past and I will probably have certain critical things to say in the future, but under all the circumstances the wheat board is doing by far the best job that is being done by any branch or any other officials in the Department of Trade and Commerce.

The transport controller has the power but he blames the wheat board because he says the board has the power. The Minister of Trade and Commerce has got plenty of power also. He has never been short of power but he has been telling us this session that the trouble is really a box car shortage and the transport controller tells him in so many words that he really does not know what he is talking about because there never has been a shortage of box cars. The transport controller wants to blame the wheat board. One would expect that if the wheat board had the power to allocate box cars that would be the end of it and that would be all the transport controller would have to say on that point, but on page 25 of the same transcript of evidence Mr. Roy