

Atlantic Regional Freight Assistance Act

change in any of the measures which either now prevail or which, I hope, will prevail following the passage of this legislation until and unless this more comprehensive program is brought forward and until there has been full-scale consultation with the premiers and the representatives of the Atlantic provinces.

I have made fairly general references throughout to the Atlantic provinces, but may I say to hon. members who represent constituencies in the province of Quebec, particularly that portion of the province of Quebec which comes within the select territory, that it is our intention as well—and we have already held preliminary discussions with the government of the province of Quebec on this matter—to invite the province to participate in this federal-provincial committee. It may be that they will wish to have a member on the committee, to which of course we will be more than pleased to agree. On the other hand, because their circumstances are somewhat different they may wish to have a different kind of representation. But in any event I believe that this measure will also be of significance to that portion of the province of Quebec which comes within the select territory because truckers within that region shipping outbound to other parts of Canada will now have benefits which of course they did not enjoy before.

In any event, let me reiterate the point that it is my intention and the intention of the government to ensure the maintenance of all of the significant portions of the Maritime Freight Rates Act not affected by this legislation until such time as this more comprehensive program comes forward. Does the hon. member wish to ask a question?

Mr. Nowlan: Yes, perhaps the minister's explanation might help in the later stages of the debate. My question has direct reference to the minister's explanation of the interim aspect of the measure and the fact that no other fundamental changes will be made, as I understood him, until the whole comprehensive program is laid before the house. I appreciate the difficulties of preparing the plan and I also appreciate the fact that there have been consultations with the premiers. When we come to clause 3 I will want to read the telegram I received from the truckers which is an extension of the telegram the minister read. The purpose of my question to the minister is to clarify a point in my mind. In view of the fact that clause 10 specifies when clauses 5 and 6 will come into force, is my understanding not correct that clause 5

[Mr. Jamieson.]

will have in effect no application for nine months?

Mr. Jamieson: Perhaps I might deal with the whole general area since there have been a number of comments regarding it. I refer to clause 5 and to the related question of the hon. member for Annapolis Valley. If hon. members will read the statement I made in the house last Tuesday, there are two references in it which are particularly pertinent to what I want to say. On page 10227 of *Hansard*, about the middle of the column, I made the following comment:

In order to provide the necessary funds for those subsidies which will place truckers on a basis of equality with railways on outbound traffic, it is proposed to authorize the Governor in Council to terminate the so-called freeze at an earlier date than originally contemplated in Bill C-182, thereby removing another discrimination between railways and truckers.

In other words, what I said was that we will not maintain the freeze for the full 12 months. The reason I am reluctant at this point to state a specific date upon which the freeze may be removed is that it is my intention and the intention of the government to extend the subsidy to outbound trucking in advance of the lifting of the freeze, and it seems to me that there is a very good rationale for doing this. If, for example, we can arrange to get the necessary registration of truckers and common carriers by that date, I hope that we can provide the subsidy arrangement for outbound truck freight by July 15. If that is done, we will then see how long it takes for truck tariffs to be established before we move to take off the freeze on rail lines, and we believe that this process will have a salutary effect in terms of what the railway rates are likely to be. I hope this is a satisfactory explanation to the hon. member of why there is no specific date for the lifting of the freeze.

On the question of clause 5 and the powers granted to the Governor in Council may I say that, in my own view, this would not be perhaps the best way in which to approach this problem if we were dealing with the matter on the comprehensive basis to which we have all referred earlier. But if we were to say that it had to come into effect on a fixed date, that is, that any proposals with regard to the changing of the intra-traffic were to come into force on a fixed date, this would mean that we could take no action until the federal-provincial committee had completed a very comprehensive study, and this would mean in turn that the truckers