

Atlantic Regional Freight Assistance Act

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I believe there was unanimous agreement that at this point the house would suspend what was before it and deal with Bill No. C-207 for the remaining time today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I think the proper procedure is for the Minister of Transport to move a motion to adjourn debate. If that is agreeable to the house we could, after the motion has been agreed to, proceed to the next item of business. Do hon. members agree that we proceed in that manner?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Jamieson: I so move.

On motion of Mr. Jamieson the debate was adjourned.

ATLANTIC REGIONAL FREIGHT ASSISTANCE ACT

MEASURE TO AMPLIFY RATES LEGISLATION, TO REMOVE CERTAIN STATUTORY REDUCTIONS, AND OTHER MATTERS

The house resumed from Thursday, June 19, consideration in committee of Bill No. C-207, to authorize assistance to transportation in the Atlantic region—Mr. Jamieson—Mr. Faulkner in the chair.

The Chairman: Order, please. When the committee rose on Thursday, June 19, clause 5 was under consideration.

On clause 5—*Power to vary or remove rates.*

Mr. Thomas (Moncton): Mr. Chairman, when debate on this bill was suspended on Thursday I indicated that we, on this side of the house, were prepared to accept this legislation on the strict understanding that it is an interim measure and on the firm guarantee given to us by the minister that he would be introducing much more comprehensive legislation in the coming session. I also said that although we agreed with most provisions of the bill, we were unhappy about clause 5(1), the clause we were discussing when debate on the bill was adjourned. We feel that this is an undesirable provision to include in the bill. I think the minister more or less agreed that this was not the most desirable way to handle what is intended, and I had the impression after listening to him that he might bring in some changes in this area. I

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

will, therefore, ask the minister if he has anything to announce in this regard which may allay the fears and suspicions some of us harbour with respect to this piece of legislation.

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Chairman, in reply to my hon. friend, may I say that I have read with a good deal of care the transcript of the proceedings that took place in the house on the occasion when this bill was discussed initially. I have tried to take into account the representations of hon. members opposite and to bear in mind what I think was their general theme. They intimated that they wanted this bill to be passed and to be passed quickly, so that its benefits could be extended to the Atlantic region. At the same time, they expressed reservations about certain of its clauses.

I said when introducing the bill that it was not a complete measure and that I would be quite prepared to see how it might be amended in some way in order to accommodate the views of representatives of the parties opposite. It seemed to me, on re-reading the proceedings, that the key point of hon. members' remarks revolved around clause 5 which has to do with the power of the governor in council relating to intra subsidies. That is the subsidy which is recommended now at the rate of 20 per cent within the specified region and which it is proposed will be subject to a review by a federal-provincial committee. It is hoped that the committee will apply this subsidy in a more beneficial way to the transport problems of the Atlantic region.

I am sure that hon. members understand that clause 5 was included in this bill because it was necessary for us to move on a progressive basis in order to implement this change. I think hon. members were unanimous in agreeing that they did not want to await the completion of the report. The completion of the report of the committee might take some considerable time and they did not want to wait for that before some of the provisions of the bill could be introduced. What I suggested at that time was that we wanted to be in a position from which, if the committee made a specific recommendation having to do with a particular commodity or group of commodities, we could move in order to implement that committee recommendation. Hence, we included clause 5 in the bill.

I understand the concern of hon. members opposite about clause 5 and about the fact that it gives authority to the governor in