

## Supply—Transport

serious for Canada if we had not had a properly organized trucking system capable of transporting fuel oil products from one end of Canada to the other. We are in a very vulnerable position in this country, particularly in the event of war. One of the first things that would be knocked out of commission would be our railroads. If you eliminate the tank trucks used for carrying oil and oil products we would be in a most vulnerable position. I do not think we should ever permit ourselves to get into such a situation.

So serious has this become that the Saskatchewan government has taken some part in it and a resolution was passed in the legislature regarding this matter. I should like to quote from an article in the *Western Producer* of April 3, 1952, reading as follows:

## Saskatchewan Backs Truckers' Case

The Saskatchewan legislature this week approved a resolution urging the federal government to amend the Transport Act so that highway truckers can appear before the board of transport commissioners to present their views on agreed charges.

The resolution, which was moved by A. H. McDonald, Liberal, Moosomin, received support from all house members but one—V. P. Deshayé, Liberal, Melville.

Mr. McDonald said there were 20,000 trucks for hire in the province and any group of that size should have the right to be heard before the transport board.

I want to speak about the right of the truckers to appear before the board of transport commissioners and object to contracts being entered into under the agreed charges clause. Somebody may say that I am arguing to have the trucking industry brought under the board of transport commissioners and under federal control, but I am doing no such thing.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Yes, you are.

**Mr. Johnston:** Oh, no, I am not. I think it would be wrong to have our trucking transport system placed under federal control, and I think the minister realizes that that would not be a proper thing to do. What I am talking about is the privilege that should be accorded to the truckers to appear before the board of transport commissioners which is accorded to the railroads by the provincial bodies. Trucking today is under provincial jurisdiction and is regulated by provincial bodies. However, the railroads have the right to appear before those bodies to make their submissions. Then the board dealing with the matter of rates and so on is in position to say whether the rates are fair and equitable and to judge whether the rates used by the trucking companies will endanger the life of the railroads. That is the way it should be.

[Mr. Johnston.]

That being so, why are not the truck transport carriers accorded the same right to appear before the board of transport commissioners to present their arguments? That does not mean to say that the board of transport commissioners shall be bound by their submission. They are perfectly free to come to any conclusion which they think is wise. To allow the trucking organizations to appear before the board of transport commissioners would in no way jeopardize the position of the railroads but it would give considerable enlightenment to the views of the board of transport commissioners. This is the thought of the royal commission on transportation, because at page 93 of the report we find this:

It is important also that shippers and carriers should have an opportunity of being heard, so that the board may be made aware of all aspects of the question.

That is exactly my point, that the board of transport commissioners should be made aware of all the aspects of the question. I do not know just what rewording of the act would be necessary to permit the truck transport association to appear before the board of transport commissioners to make their presentations without becoming bound by the terms of the act. That is a lawyer's problem and I am sure that there are enough in this house to see that we get the proper wording if the government decides to amend the act accordingly.

This question is of such importance to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia that the government should consider amending the Transport Act in such a way as to permit the truck transport carriers to appear before the board of transport commissioners to present their case so that board shall be made aware of all the aspects of the case. This could be done without placing the truck transport business under federal control. Something must be done if we are to permit this great trucking industry to survive.

I want to refer to one other conclusion of the royal commission. I said before that when this bill was brought before the committee in 1937, of which I was a member, it was never the intention of that committee to permit any major industry to eliminate its competitor. The royal commission has this to say at page 95 of its report:

It appears obvious that parliament did not intend the agreed charges to be a weapon to destroy or eliminate competition but rather to enable the railways to meet competition.

It does not take a Philadelphia lawyer, it does not take any lawyer, and it does not take even an Ottawa lawyer, as has been indicated to me, to understand that if we allow this act to continue in its present form,