

*Department of Transport Act*

the transport controller does. I have been endeavouring for years to find out just what the transport controller does, when he is in Ottawa or in Winnipeg and is not some other place. I do know that he acts as a kind of clearing house for beefs, that if there is a shortage of box cars at one particular point that is brought to his attention perhaps something is done to correct that situation; but apart from that I do not know what the transport controller does. The Minister of Transport this afternoon has told us that in fact the whole authority for the shipment of grain and for the assembling of grain, the authority to ban the use of box cars for various grades of grain, are all the responsibility of the Canadian wheat board, and that if there is any blame about shortage of grades and demurrage and so on it is the wheat board's responsibility. I suggest to the minister that the transport controller has ample authority to do whatever he may now be doing and, in addition to doing that, to control in fact the transportation of grain, to control in fact the allocation of box cars between delivery points. I should like to go one step further. He has sufficient authority to see that there is a fair allocation of box cars among the elevator companies at each delivery point, so that the farmers may at long last, if such were done, have the opportunity to deliver the grain to the elevators of their choice rather than to whatever elevator may in fact be given the box cars.

The extension of the section of the Transport Act that we are now considering reads in part as follows:

Notwithstanding anything in any act, the governor in council may make regulations for the purpose of ensuring the prompt, efficient and orderly transport, by means of ships or by a company to which the Railway Act applies, of goods in bulk and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, may make regulations respecting:

- (a) the use, operation or supply of transport and storage facilities;
- (b) the quantities of any goods in bulk to be transported or stored, either generally or with reference to any particular goods, persons, time, place or facilities, including priorities respecting transport and storage;

I would like to know how legislation could be drafted with language any more all-embracing and all-powerful as regards the assembling of box cars for grain or for any of the other goods mentioned a little later on. I believe that within this act to which I have now referred the transport controller has complete and adequate authority to deal with the distribution of box cars in order to remove the very grave inequities in their distribution that now prevail.

It is all right to quote figures to show that shipments of grain in this crop year to

date—or a date approaching today—are almost as good, within 10,000 or 11,000 box cars, as they were a year ago; but, even if they were better, that does not remove the very grave inequity in the distribution of box cars. I have here the wheat review for March, and it refers to the number of elevator shipping points in western Canada on various quotas. Let us take the two-bushel quota. On April 4 of this year there were in Saskatchewan 481 points on a two-bushel quota. I wish to explain to hon. members that a two-bushel quota at this time is a low quota. Points that are more fortunate are on four or five-bushel quotas. On the low two-bushel quota, there were 481 Saskatchewan points, but only 85 Manitoba points and only 197 Alberta points.

There is an obvious demonstration that, as between the shipping points in Saskatchewan and Alberta and as between the shipping points in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, there has been and there is a very unfair distribution of box cars.

I now refer to the one-bushel quota. We are almost in sight of the end of the present crop year. On April 4 there were in Saskatchewan still 205 points, out of 1,107 points, still on a one-bushel quota. In Manitoba there was just one point on a one-bushel quota, and in Alberta just 15 points on a one-bushel quota. Here is discrimination of the very worst kind, and I object as a member from Saskatchewan to this kind of allocation of box cars which on April 4 of this year leaves 205 points in Saskatchewan on a one-bushel quota, as compared with only 16 points on a one-bushel quota in Manitoba and Alberta combined.

Certainly there is no excuse, with the wide powers that are given to the transport controller, for this kind of situation to prevail. We in the C.C.F. now for a number of years have been endeavouring to get a fair distribution of box cars. We have been asking that the farmers be given the right to apportion box cars among elevator companies. So far the government has turned a deaf ear. It has been unprepared to do anything to establish a formula or a means by which a fair distribution of box cars might be brought about. Certainly there is no lack of power; the power is here, and I hope that the government will use that power, through the transport controller and through anyone else that may have power in this field, to bring about a fair distribution of box cars.

The Minister of Transport has said this afternoon that there is no shortage of box cars. Mr. Roy Milner, the transport controller, had this to say in Regina on March 9, 1956, in regard to this question:

Please understand I am not imputing to any person improper motives in putting this stuff in