

Now, Mr. Cooper's comment was that your assumption was correct, but that it has to be qualified with the fact that when there is competition shown under the existing schedule, under the existing scheme of section 7 today—and as you would appreciate the philosophy of the bill is increasing competition, more realized competition—section 7 of the act becomes less and less effective.

Mr. STEWART: You people believe that the statutory advantages established under the Maritime Freight Rates Act have been lost sight of, and you now fear that sight of those advantages will be lost irrevocably.

Mr. DICKSON: Yes.

Mr. COOPER: Yes, I would say that that was correct. We are moving into and within a more intensive area of competition. As we move into the area where competition is the governing factor, as I understand it, under Bill No. C-120 we are fearful that our position will even further deteriorate as more and more competition derives, and so on and so forth, in points and in areas out of select territory. We want to preserve the position we presently have with respect to these rates under the Freight Rates Reduction Act, and until at least this special examination has been made into our situation in the Atlantic provinces.

Mr. STEWART: I have two or three questions which will not take up too much time. I would like to ask if the commission is satisfied that the formula laid down in the proposed legislation is fair for determining the maximum rates, first, to shippers of commodities, light loads, heavy loads, bulk loads, and is it fair as between shippers of different commodities; and secondly, as between truckers and the railways.

Mr. COOPER: Well, Mr. Stewart, that question is under active consideration now by the Maritime Transportation Commission in consultation with other provincial governments interested in the bill. This submission we have made today is on the general principle of the bill as it effects the Atlantic provinces. We expect at some time in the future, that we by ourselves, or acting in association with other governments, would present our considered views on the questions you have raised before the committee. I do not know if perhaps we could go any further than that at the moment, although I am not attempting in any way to evade the question.

Mr. STEWART: I think that if more is to be said later perhaps all that could be said now is that there is some doubt evidently concerning the suitability of the 15 ton test of the amount of the maximum rate.

Mr. COOPER: There certainly is doubt now.

Mr. STEWART: Is the commission familiar with some discussion which took place recently concerning a proposal to increase competition by constructing a highway from Montreal to Moncton? I do not know if you have read yesterday's Montreal Star, but the matter has reached the stage where it has now become the subject of cartoons. Are you familiar with the proposal, and if so, what do you think would be the effect of such a highway on the solution of your problem?

Mr. DICKSON: Well, Madam Chairman, in answer to Mr. Stewart's question, the highway you refer to is commonly called in the Atlantic provinces the Corridor road and the commission has said that this road would help to shorten the distance between the Atlantic provinces and our major markets, and that it might be of considerable help to the region. There might be other variations of the idea of shortening the distance between the Atlantic provinces and her major markets to be considered as well. But in any event I think it would be fair to say that anything which would shorten the distance between the Atlantic provinces and their major markets certainly would be welcome.