

Interprovincial Transportation

ment of goods from one province of Canada to other provinces of Canada without trucking firms and manufacturers facing prohibitive costs associated with licensing, gas taxes and permits which could be eliminated through the issuing of federal licences for interprovincial carriers.

He said: Mr. Speaker, since it is the first opportunity I have had to address this House, may I congratulate you and Mr. Deputy Speaker on your election to office and pay tribute to the manner in which you preside over our deliberations. May I also take this opportunity to thank the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk for the consideration shown me as a new member. Being a western member, you no doubt recognize that you will face no difficulty so far as I am concerned since I follow our tradition of being even-tempered and easy to handle.

The motion which I have presented deals with a problem that faces the trucking industry all across Canada and which, despite good intentions in the past, is still unresolved in practical terms. The basis of the motion is that there is clearly a need in Canada for a trans-Canada licence, that is, for a licence that allows trucks to travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific with the payment of only one fee which would be distributed among the provinces.

That there is need for such a licence can be proven very simply by talking to any person who has been actively engaged in any manufacturing, agricultural or trucking enterprise that deals in interprovincial shipments. As a private citizen involved in a small manufacturing company in Alberta, wholly Canadian-owned, which purchases all Canadian components and is trying to compete in the markets of central Canada, it has been my experience that we have been unable to use an all Canadian route. Why, you ask, are we forced to head for the nearest exit point from Canada to the United States, travel for over 2,000 miles along American highways and only enter Canada again when we come to the Michigan-Ontario border? It is because of the very basic fact that each province has its own set of varying regulations and each demands payment of its own licences, gas taxes or permits, which again are in no way uniform and present the trucker with a maze of red tape.

To be more specific for the benefit of those who have not been subjected to the ridiculous complexities that truckers are faced with, here is one example of what the trucker has to deal with. At the present time, if we take the maximum length of a semi-trailer, we find there are seven different maximum lengths in the ten provinces. If we take the maximum height allowed, we find that there are four different heights in the ten provinces. If we take the maximum weight of a two-axle truck and one two-axle full trailer, we find that there are six different categories. And if you decide to drive a two-axle truck with full trailer across Canada, you had better stay home. There are five different categories and in four of the provinces these vehicles are not allowed to operate. How could you, Mr. Speaker, operate under such conditions?

A trans-Canada licence would remove these disadvantages. Our truckers would be spending their money in Canada, they would be using Canadian gas, Canadian restaurants and, in short, Canadian services of all descriptions. Having our truckers use our routes would stimulate employment in many of the communities through which they would be travelling. In total, there would be a posi-

tive economic gain to the provinces that is now lost to the United States.

The varying regulations and fees lay a heavy burden on the trucking industry, a burden that is passed back to the manufacturers and primary producer and is passed on to the consumer. It is unfair that only one sector of the transportation industry is faced with these disabilities. How can these private firms be expected to compete with the heavily government-supported railways and airlines? How can they compete with trains and planes that have only one set of regulations countrywide? The simple fact is that in large measure they cannot.

If they were able to highball their way unimpeded along the trans-Canada highway they could deliver many goods faster and in better condition. For those who doubt my words may I quote this specific instance. A carload of cattle, a perishable product and one that should be transported under the most humane conditions, is generally transported between five to eight days by rail. When carried by truck, the same cattle can leave Alberta and arrive in the feed lots of Ontario in no more than 60 hours after they leave the ranch.

The regulations mean that trucks must compete with government-supported carriers. Only a uniform set of regulations and a single licence valid all along the trans-Canada highway can compensate these firms and give them a chance. The reason the trans-Canada highway is mentioned in particular is that this is the longest paved highway in the world, which links us together from sea to sea and was constructed with a total input of more than \$900 million of federal funds, funds which should not only be for the benefit of the Canadian and American tourist but for the Canadian consumer as well, for the families whose income is used in buying goods to live on, who may not have enough money to travel but whose tax dollars none the less helped construct this road.

Research that I have undertaken has brought forth the fact that there have been high-sounding phrases presented on this subject, but absolutely, positively, from a practical man's point of view, no action. What is the interpretation to be placed on the following statements found in the National Transportation Act:

The national transportation policy as set out in the National Transportation Act is intended to apply to all modes of transportation in Canada within the jurisdiction of the parliament of Canada.

The assignment of the federal jurisdiction over motor carriers to provincial boards does not provide for implementation of the national transportation policy.

Motor carriers cannot be considered in isolation but rather must be viewed as a part of the total transportation system. Motor carriers often complement or provide suitable substitutes for other modes of transport. These relationships demand a regulatory structure that will foster the achievement of the objectives of the National Transportation Act without prejudice to any one part of the transportation system.

• (1610)

What is the interpretation to be placed upon this section of the National Transportation Act? It is highly desirable that uniformity of regulation be achieved for interprovincial motor carriers and, if possible, for all motor carriers operating in Canada whether intraprovincial or extrapro-

[Mr. Hurlburt.]