

Department of Transport Act

want to put words in his mouth, that the transport controller exercised his authority when the box cars were loaded with grain. It was his job then to co-ordinate the movement out through the country to the terminals. Prior to that time he had no authority in so far as the actual placing of the empty box car was concerned.

Mr. Marler: I said that was not part of his duties.

Mr. Bryson: At this select committee hearing Mr. Milner gave evidence and I want you to listen to this. The report reads:

Very little was left to the railways to decide regarding allocation of cars.

"I tell the railways to carry out wheat board orders. I tell them, within good railway practice, to put cars where the need is shown to be greatest," Mr. Milner said.

Now certainly he has some jurisdiction—

Mr. Marler: Not necessarily.

Mr. Byrne: He is just a straw boss.

Mr. Bryson: You can call him what you like, but in my opinion he has some jurisdiction.

Mr. Byrne: We have heard it a dozen times.

Mr. Bryson: I should like the minister to try to clear up this confusion so far as Mr. Milner's authority is concerned. Perhaps he could give the committee a further statement to see if there can be further clarification of this apparently very knotty problem.

Mr. Marler: I hope when I have said it this time it will be sufficient. When Mr. Milner appeared before the select committee of the Saskatchewan legislature, this was one of the first things he said:

It has never been part of my duties to allocate box cars to various stations or to elevators at those stations.

He continued and said:

In fact I have not the power to do so.

I am not going to deal with the question of whether or not he has the power to do so, because I do not really believe that is the material issue at the moment. It seems to me quite clear that the transport controller has never allocated box cars to specific points. I think we should agree on that. I do not think anybody should charge him with responsibility for the fact that at some points there have not been the box cars they hoped would be spotted.

The hon. member for Peace River and the hon. member for Prince Albert earlier spoke about the terms of the regulations. The hon. member for Mackenzie went through some rather extraordinary verbal exercises in saying that "may" might mean "may not" or it might mean "shall". I would be glad to

explain to him that "may" usually means "may". In fact, I think we can say it always means may. I hope when the hon. gentleman has a moment of leisure he will look into the meaning of "may" and perhaps we will get away from any further discussion of that question.

Mr. Argue: He does not want to get it through today.

Mr. Marler: Is he thinking of "may" again? I hope we can get it through right now. The practical way of looking at this matter is not to consider whether or not the transport controller should intervene at this particular point, or whether or not he has the theoretical power to allocate box cars to a particular point. Surely we must relate the whole marketing operation of the Canadian wheat board to the matter. That is the basic consideration. How can the wheat best be moved to points for export? Surely no one can know better what has to be done than the people who are engaged in the actual operation of marketing the wheat. The role of the transport controller in the operation is that of seeing, when the board has decided at what points cars are to be loaded and shipped and where they are to go, that the movement is not interfered with by other considerations; to see that on an over-all basis cars are made available by the railroads when they are required, but not at the specific points. As I said earlier, he tries to co-ordinate the movement of wheat toward points of export with the ships that are coming to get the wheat.

So far as I am concerned, Mr. Chairman, I think I have answered all the questions that have been raised, and I hope we can get the resolution through. Everybody seems to be in favour of getting it through. A moment ago the hon. gentleman mentioned "may", and I thought he was thinking of adopting the resolution in May. My suggestion is that we should adopt the resolution and then get on with the bill and try to make some progress.

Mr. Argue: The C.C.F. would like to see two things done in this present situation. First we would like to see more box cars made available immediately to those many hundreds of delivery points in western Canada that are still on very low delivery quotas of one or two bushels. We think a much better job could have been done, and should have been done, in making box cars available in such a manner as to more nearly equalize the quotas amongst western producers. Second, we would like to see a system of allocation brought about that would allocate box cars at an individual marketing point among the various elevator companies at that point on the basis of the wishes of the producers