

I do not want to belabour the point, Mr. Chairman, because I was assured that this was an interim measure. Many truckers today feel that the measure has not gone far enough but that at least it recognizes the principle that trucking should receive financial assistance if rail traffic receives it.

● (10:30 a.m.)

Under the Maritime Freight Rates Act assistance was provided to the railways. This was one of the conditions of Confederation. The truckers naturally say the bill has not gone far enough. They have not been given the measure of assistance which the railways have received in respect of movement in the Atlantic area, but their hope is that once the principle is recognized in respect of west-bound traffic the government may remove the discrimination which now exists. Traffic within the region is called intra-movement.

I do not think the bill goes far enough, because we all hope to develop a thriving trucking industry in the Atlantic area, and, frankly, on the basis of legislation of this type I cannot see any marked development as being likely. We do not have a large market in the region and our principal population centres are relatively small in size. Of necessity we use broken lots when freight is moved. The truckers can obviously carry a good deal in their new truck and trailer transports. I suggest that a system whereby full cars are sent by rail from Montreal, Toronto and other places to a central distribution point, from which they could be delivered by truck to individual consignees, would do a great deal to develop a better transportation system in the area. Yet movement of this type receives no benefit under the bill.

If it had been made clear, preferably somewhere in this legislation, that this was only an interim measure and that a comprehensive measure would be introduced in the fall I might not have said nine-tenths of the things I have said today. There is another aspect which causes me concern; one might regard it as the other side of the coin. The bill does not recognize the position of the truckers vis-à-vis the railway. There is still discrimination in favour of the railroad; there is not much doubt about that. The minister's answer will be, of course, that we are dealing now with an interim measure. When I look through the bill I see that clause five, when read in connection with clause six, will hopefully provide some assistance to the truckers. It seems to me that clause five deals with the power which becomes necessary if this is to be an

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interim measure. Clause 5(1) says that regardless of what is contained in the Maritime Freight Rates Act the Governor in Council may vary or remove the reduction in tariffs for the preferred movements of traffic prescribed; and so on. Reading clause five and six together I conclude that any savings would be used to provide supplemental assistance to the trucking industry.

The minister made a good speech, but I have difficulty in understanding why, if this is an interim measure, the minister needs this power given him in clause 5(1), because reading clauses 5 and 6 together, as I understand the legislation, the rate freeze is to be extended to March 23, 1970, which is nine months from now. Clauses 5 and 6 as I understand them do not come into effect until the expiry of the rate freeze on March 23, 1970 or earlier if the freeze is ended by proclamation. If there is no proclamation, then clause 5 does not even come into effect. Is that not correct?

Mr. Jamieson: No.

Mr. Nowlan: The minister suggests no. In that case I would be interested to hear his further explanation of clauses 5 and 6, because as I read them they do not come into effect until the rate freeze has expired, something which will occur, if this bill is passed, in nine months time unless the minister takes some other action by way of proclamation. I believe the purpose of clauses 5 and 6 is to make some reduction in tariffs and, out of this reduction, to give more assistance to the truckers.

Bearing in mind the amount of discrimination which still exists I suppose the trucking industry would like to see clauses 5 and 6 used to wipe out the interim subsidies to the railroads which this bill provides. What puzzles me, as the representative of a maritime riding and one who has taken an interest in the Crownsnest Pass situation—I was out there for seven years—is that there is no restriction whatsoever under 5(1) on the power of the cabinet to vary or reduce the tariffs on this preferred movement. As I read the bill it is not outside the realm of possibility that the cabinet could castrate the very core of the Maritime Freight Rates Act by eliminating tariffs altogether on this traffic movement, using as justification the argument that it was paying supplemental assistance to the truckers on a selective basis.

As hon. members are aware, the present Maritime Freight Rates Act can be changed only by legislation. I put it to the minister