

trying to lay the groundwork for such a piece of legislation, is now coming to fruition. It speaks very highly for that hon. gentleman because, as a minister of transport, he had a genuine rapport with the provinces. Indeed, he was certainly recognized as one of the ministers of transport who worked closely with the provinces. The fact that this bill is now being introduced at this particular time is a clear indication of the work which had commenced at that particular time. I want to commend him and congratulate him for the work he did.

At first the regulation of highway traffic only was contemplated, since each of the other modes of transport already had some form of dangerous goods regulations. It soon became apparent, however, that this was not enough. In the first place, the increasing use of intermodal transport made it necessary to seek to harmonize the regulations for all modes, so that consignors of dangerous goods need only follow one set of rules when preparing their goods for shipment.

In the second place, it was obvious that true safety in transport could only be achieved by regulating pre-transport activities such as the manufacture of freight containers and packagings, the in-transit activities such as packing, loading and temporary storage, and the post-transport activities such as unloading and receiving.

In the third place, much of the existing legislation, both federal and provincial, which deals with dangerous goods was written in terms of specific substances such as explosives, or dealt with such related matters as construction standards or vehicles, fire prevention and occupational safety. The result was a proliferation of well-thought-out but rather narrowly focused regulations which often proved incompatible and therefore unenforceable.

Finally, both exporters and importers were being faced, to their disadvantage, with contradictions between Canadian regulations and those of other countries. The need to adapt to international standards and procedures therefore had become urgent.

The first proposal for a transportation of dangerous goods act was tabled in Parliament in May, 1978. That piece of legislation died on the order paper when that session of Parliament came to an end. It was reintroduced in November, 1978, and second reading debate started on February 16, 1979. At that time there was about a 30-minute debate on this very important issue. On that occasion, as opposition transportation critic, I stated that the Progressive Conservative party supported the bill in principle and recognized the need for it and for a co-ordinated approach to legislation governing the transportation of dangerous goods. Also I stated that the objectives of the bill must be met without imposing excessive economic or legal restraints on industry, and that there must be full consultation with the provinces, as well as with industry, to ensure that the regulations which are the meat of the legislation were practical, acceptable and enforceable.

I hope by now it is well known that two of the most important aims of this government are the improvement of federal-provincial relations and the reduction of the regulatory

### *Transportation of Dangerous Goods*

burden upon industry. Bill C-25, as it is now drafted, incorporates both of these aims while maintaining its original goal.

Those hon. members who are familiar with the previous bills, Bill C-53 and Bill C-17, will note that the bill currently before the House has been extensively restructured, although the objectives remain unchanged. This restructuring has been done as a result of lengthy and detailed discussions with representatives of affected industries and of the provinces, as I indicated earlier. Of course these discussions have been going on since the legislation was first conceived. However, as time passed, and as it was made clear that the federal government was seeking co-operation and not confrontation in this enterprise, debates between the parties concerned became increasingly productive. Consequently after Bill C-17 was published, both industry and the provinces were in a position to comment on the legislation with a full understanding of the policy it was intended to implement, and to discuss it in full detail.

The role played by industry in the preparation of the current bill has been very important. It is important to me because I have been able to benefit from their practical experience to ensure that the legislation makes economic as well as political sense. It is important to industry because they were provided with the opportunity to make their views known and to have them effectively recognized. Similarly, the participation of the provinces in the preparation of this legislation has been mutually beneficial.

From a practical point of view, it would be difficult for the federal government to administer and enforce such a sweeping legislation program alone, without the wholehearted support of the provinces, which incidentally I was promised when I met with my provincial counterparts in September. At the same time it would be an obvious waste of resources for each province to develop such comprehensive legislation and maintain the research, training, information and enforcement operations which are a necessary adjunct to it. Thus, the relationship between the two levels of government, in dealing with the problem of dangerous goods in transport, has been and must continue to be symbiotic in the truest sense of the word.

It is not my intention to take up too much of the time of the House by further repeating in any great detail the reasons which gave rise to the formulation of Bill C-25 and its predecessors, or the purposes it is designed to serve. Briefly, the bill is part of a three-pronged safety program, consisting of legislation supported by a trained inspectorate and an emergency response network, the latter two being developed in co-operation with other federal agencies and with the provinces.

Although it involves the imposition of fairly severe penalties on offenders, the proposed act is designed essentially to have a preventative effect. For the first time it will be possible to promulgate regulations for transporting and handling dangerous goods for transport in such a way as to facilitate intermodal, interprovincial and international trade in them, while promoting public safety in this area by establishing comprehensive and comprehensible safety standards and procedures.