

Department of Transport Act

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

INQUIRY AS TO RESUMPTION OF ELEVATOR
SERVICE IN PEACE TOWER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Public Works. In view of the great number of visitors that are now visiting these buildings or will be during the next few months, how much longer is it going to be before the elevator in the peace tower is in operation?

Hon. Robert H. Winters (Minister of Public Works): I will take that question as notice, Mr. Speaker.

TRANSPORT

CONTINUATION OF AUTHORITY TO MAKE REGULA-
TIONS AND APPOINT CONTROLLERS

The house resumed, from Tuesday, April 24, consideration in committee of the following resolution—Mr. Marler—Mr. Robinson (Simcoe East) in the chair:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the continuation for a further period of two years of authority to make regulations for the control of transport of goods in bulk including, amongst other things, the appointment of one or more controllers and one or more deputy controllers to carry out the provisions of such regulations and the payment of their remuneration.

Mr. Marler: All I can say in reply to the laughter from the other side is that I shall be happy when I can speak with the wisdom of my hon. friend, the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. Argue: So will we.

Mr. Marler: When my hon. friend is half-way there, I think he will find he has more chance of getting on this side of the house.

Mr. Argue: Oh, oh.

Mr. Marler: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member for Assiniboia will allow me to continue my remarks without benefit of his numerous interruptions perhaps I may be able to answer some of the questions that were brought up during the course of the discussion yesterday. When we adjourned last evening I was attempting to reply to the inquiry of the hon. member for Brandon-Souris as to whether there was in fact an absolute shortage of box cars in Canada. I thought, Mr. Chairman, that the facts relating to the crop year 1952-53 were eloquent testimony to the fact that the number of box cars in Canada required to move a good crop were available, and that what had been done in 1952-1953 when the total export shipments of wheat and other grains amounted to something more than 400 million bushels was a

[Mr. Garson.]

demonstration of the ability of the railroads to move a crop of the dimensions of that which we had in 1952-1953.

During the course of the discussion yesterday afternoon there was some reference to the situation with regard to the position of Canadian railways vis-à-vis the United States railways in the matter of box cars.

The hon. member for Kindersley referred to some of the figures but I do not think he gave a complete picture of the situation. Unfortunately for the Canadian railways perhaps, the matter of the movement of cars is not confined solely to box cars. In their relations with the United States railways account must be taken of the over-all picture. Account also must be taken of the fact that the movement of finished paper from Canada to the United States necessitates the use by Canadian railways of the best box cars they have in their inventory. I am sure that the hon. member will appreciate that once those box cars get on to United States lines, being of good quality they are not returned with the same celerity as would be the case if they were not so suitable for all kinds of traffic.

The Canadian railways are under a disability merely because of the number of the shipments of newsprint that are taking place. This is an additional drain on the supply of good box cars in Canada, if I may express it in those terms.

I do know as a matter of fact because I have had an opportunity of discussing the question with the president of Canadian National Railways—and I am sure the same applies to the Canadian Pacific Railway—that Canadian National Railways is making every effort to get back the cars that belong to it through the American Association of Railways. The Canadian Pacific Railway, of course, is doing the same thing as far as its cars are concerned.

When one takes a look at the over-all picture one finds that in a general way there is a more or less even balance between United States cars on Canadian lines and Canadian cars on United States lines.

I will agree that the box car situation in particular is unfavourable as far as the Canadian railroads are concerned. I would like to emphasize that the transport controller has no more power over Canadian box cars going to the United States than has the president of the Canadian National Railways himself. I do not think, Mr. Chairman, that is a factor in the conditions to which the hon. gentleman referred yesterday.

When one looks at the over-all problem of transporting grain from country points to the west coast, the lakehead or the Atlantic