

Atlantic Regional Freight Assistance Act

order No. 68 the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications. We spent a day debating that report and it is really very straightforward and simple. It is a unanimous report, and although I do not have it before me and cannot quote precisely it did recommend that the freeze be extended for another year. That recommendation was made to meet the deadline in March when the freeze was supposed to come off. It also recommended that the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission allowing the C.N.R. to abandon passenger service in Newfoundland be left in abeyance until the committee had a chance to make its final recommendations. The final recommendations concerning our Atlantic provinces transportation study are now before the house in the form of the twelfth report.

It should be noted here that a motion has yet to be moved for concurrence in the twelfth report. The motion for concurrence in the fifth report is now before the house in the form of government order No. 68. The point has been well made that this legislation should have at least been held until the report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications and the recommendations of the committee concerning its reference from parliament to study the transport problems of the Atlantic provinces had been made. This is what this bill deals with in part.

Having said that I should now like to refer to the minister's remarks. He has assured the house that this is an interim measure. I am very sceptical about interim measures, as I thought the minister was, because we have heard him both inside and outside the house criticize interim measures. He has applied to them the term "band-aid legislation". Here we have another example of band-aid legislation because this measure, even if it is an interim one, is not good legislation. It does not do what either the Transport Committee or the government wanted to do, and it does not do what the truckers and the various people who presented briefs to the committee wanted the government to do.

It seems that for some reason the government and the new minister who must take responsibility for this legislation recently decided to bring in this measure in its present form. All the government had to do, which is really quite simple, was to extend the benefits of the Maritime Freight Rates Act to the trucking industry. That is very simple and straightforward, and that is all the truckers

[Mr. McGrath.]

wanted. Perhaps the minister would be interested in what one member of the Maritime Motor Transport Association had to say in connection with this bill. He said that this legislation is not what the truckers wanted at all. He took the minister to task and said that if Transport Minister Don Jamieson brings in this legislation he will "have a battle on his hands". I should like to hear what the minister has to say about that.

Mr. Jamieson: I know the hon. member would not want to continue on a line that is inappropriate at the moment. I should like to read into the record a telegram I received. It states:

Maritime truckers support Bill C-207 in resolution passed last night.

Mr. Nowlan: That is not the whole telegram.

Mr. Jamieson: That is the whole telegram I have.

Mr. Nowlan: I will read you another one.

Mr. McGrath: I accept that, Mr. Chairman, but I was quoting from the *Saint John Evening Times-Globe* of Saturday, June 14. It carries a story about this legislation under the headline "Mixed Reaction Greets Freight Subsidy Announcement". I presume the Maritime Motor Transport Association has reversed the stand it initially took in respect of this legislation. However, that still does not satisfy me and I am sure it does not satisfy many hon. members because of the basic weakness of this legislation as a result of the limiting and conditional way in which it applies the benefits of the Maritime Freight Rates Act to the trucking industry. Perhaps we may have more to say about this when we proceed with the clause by clause study of the bill.

I do not like the way clause 3 is worded; I do not like the discretionary powers it gives the Governor in Council. When you are talking about the Governor in Council you are talking about the minister, and I do not think he should have the discretionary power to decide which truckers will get the subsidy and under what conditions the subsidy will be paid. I also have very strong misgivings and very serious reservations about clause 5. This brings a whole new principle into the application of maritime freight rates. They were ours by statutory right under the old Maritime Freight Rates Act. They will now be