

Department of Transport Act

taking place at the present time in western Canada. During the last week or so I have had many letters pointing out to me that serious spoilage is being experienced all through the west where grain is piled outside or in granaries that are inadequate. Certainly that condition could have been overcome to a great extent if there had been a better allocation of box cars and a better movement of grain throughout that part of the country.

I should also like to mention for a moment the reluctance of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to load box cars with grain on their branch lines. I happen to live in an area where we are faced with that problem. The problem has become so acute during the last couple of years that whenever it is economically feasible the pool elevator company is endeavouring to move its elevators to a Canadian National Railways siding. I think that is extremely unfortunate. It is adding again to the cost of producing grain in those areas. These elevators have been built on C.P.R. sidings in good faith and now they are to be moved. Much of the original elevator is going to have to be dispensed with and it is going to add to the already high costs of producing grain in that area for at least two or three more years.

One of the things that I think has been most annoying during the last year or two is the number of conflicting statements that we have heard with regard to the movement of grain. I refer to statements made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce on the one hand and by the transport controller on the other. I am sure that all of us are quite familiar with those conflicting statements. For instance, Mr. Milner is quoted in the *Western Producer* of January 21 as admitting that there is a shortage of box cars. He lists adverse weather conditions as one reason for the shortage of box cars in western Canada, at the same time admitting that there is some 60 million bushels' space in the terminal elevators both at the head of the lakes and at the Pacific seaboard. Then again, on February 16 or 17—I am not sure just which—we have Mr. Milner making this statement:

Transport controller Roy W. Milner,—

This is dated "Ottawa".

—whose powers parliament will be asked to renew for two years, said Thursday there is no shortage of box cars holding up prairie grain shipments.

Then later on we have a statement by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, speaking to the Interprovincial Farm Union Council which assembled not long ago here in the city of Ottawa. At that time he said that because of the box car shortage prairie elevators will not

[Mr. Bryson.]

be emptied before spring. That is a complete reversal of the opinion of Mr. Milner.

Then again, just recently we have Mr. Milner, in western Canada, giving evidence before the select committee of the Saskatchewan legislature, making this statement:

People who claim Canada has a shortage of box cars for shipping grain are misinformed—the grain is moving as fast as export sales allow . . .

Then later on Mr. Milner is reported as saying this:

Mr. Milner said nothing annoyed him more than people who blame all their ills on a so-called box car shortage.

There we have conflicting opinions on the part of both of these responsible people.

I should also like to say this. When this new transport controller, whoever he may be, is appointed I hope he will have delegated to him much wider and greater authority than that which is apparently enjoyed by the present transport controller. I should like to point out what Mr. Milner had to say before the select committee of the Saskatchewan legislature with regard to the allocation of box cars:

Mr. Milner explained that while he could order box cars to a given point, the wheat board could supersede his order by ordering elevator companies not to deliver grain to the box cars.

Then farther on he said this:

I tell the railways to carry out wheat board orders. I tell them, within good railway practice . . .

Here we have the transport controller saying that he allocates box cars on the advice of the wheat board and yet, in the same breath, saying that when those box cars are allocated according to the wishes of the wheat board to a particular point, he has no assurance whatsoever that the wheat board will allow grain to be put into those cars. Hence it would seem that the transport controller has little if any power in that respect. Then he went on to say something that to me was an amazing revelation because I had always believed that the transport controller had extremely wide powers with respect to the allocation of box cars for any commodity in this country or with respect to Canadian box cars in the United States. Nevertheless he goes on to say this:

He said that he had no control over Canadian cars in the U.S. . . .

I therefore hope, Mr. Chairman, that when the new controller is appointed his powers will be set out definitely and that we shall know exactly what those powers are. I should like to place on the record just what the position is in respect of the movement of grain in western Canada. I am going to quote from