

*Atlantic Regional Freight Assistance Act*

On the other hand, coming back again to the relationship between the truckers and the railway companies, I think we should recall that by its acts at that period of our history parliament emphasized the original understanding of the Fathers of Confederation, namely, that in a country such as ours the railways were, and in my view still are, basic to our liability as a nation. I do not think the interests of any particular group of truck lines should be allowed to supersede our understanding of that basic concept as far as the movement of bulk goods in this country is concerned.

● (12:30 p.m.)

I would not want it to be said that I am arguing that there is no place for proper support of the trucking industry in the provision of transportation services to the producers and shippers of this country. At the same time I remind the house that one of the things that must go with that is the expenditure of major funds in the construction of highways. This burden will in large part fall on the taxpayers of Canada at the provincial level, although some of the requisite funds for this region will be provided by the government of Canada through federally raised taxes. These are some of the considerations that came to my mind as I listened to the minister introducing this interim measure to assist transportation in the Atlantic region.

I was interested in the observations of the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) about clause 5 of the bill. I can see the virtue of the flexibility which that clause provides in the administration of subsidies. I think, nevertheless, that at the committee stage the minister ought to explain to us why this kind of detailed action is to be implemented directly through the Governor in Council and not through the mechanism of the Transport Commission. It seems to me that normally parliament has set up regulatory bodies in the field of transportation and they have had well-defined responsibilities to enable them to carry out the will of parliament. In view of what the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants has said, I think it might be a good idea for the minister to spend a little time in committee outlining the reasons behind this proposal.

I agree with the hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Rose), one of the committee members to visit the maritimes, that it is better to provide assistance for the sake of shippers, producers and consumers than for

[Mr. Barnett.]

the sake of the transportation companies. The hon. member displayed a legitimate concern and, if I am not mistaken, his point will be discussed in the report of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

Having said these things, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to support those hon. members who were on the committee as well as other hon. members with constituencies in the maritimes in saying that I think it is desirable to give this bill passage at this time, on the understanding that the general policies which will no doubt be considered and discussed in the committee report will be given proper consideration when future government legislation in this field is introduced.

**Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot):** Mr. Speaker, may I begin by saying I regret that the minister has found it necessary to bring in a temporary measure in order to deal with the urgent needs and problems of maritime transportation. I was a member of the committee and toured the maritimes earlier this year. We heard many briefs and saw much evidence to substantiate the fact that transportation is a problem of major dimensions in the maritimes. The very fact that for many years the Maritime Freight Rates Act has been on our statute books indicates that this problem is of long standing. I am therefore disappointed that the newly appointed minister from that region has brought in a temporary measure. We have had problems with transportation in the maritimes almost since confederation. Why did he, therefore, introduce temporary legislation? Why did he not introduce substantially different and new legislation? After all, we want to solve the transportation difficulties in the maritimes.

This bill, which in my opinion will not be as beneficial as the Maritime Freight Rates Act was, will assist only the trucking industry in the maritimes. Its provisions will make available to truckers hauling goods out of the region assistance that was formerly available under the Maritime Freight Rates Act. Smaller operators carrying on trucking operations within the maritimes will not be helped. As I read the bill it seems that there is to be no assistance to truckers moving goods to the area.

Why should the Governor in Council be involved in regulations governing truckers? Trucking concerns operating within the region will have to come to the Governor in Council for authority to do certain things. Why should a trucker or his agent have to lobby the minister in order to obtain a