

Atlantic Regional Freight Assistance Act

committees of this house if legislation is going to be introduced before the recommendations of the committee, whatever committee it may be, are brought in and hon. members are given an opportunity to discuss them in the house.

• (11:10 a.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dumont: Mr. Chairman, in the few brief explanations I would like to give and the questions I would like to ask the minister regarding this legislation on assistance to transportation in the Atlantic Region and concerning also the designated area of Lévis, I will say to the minister that there will be the utmost confusion if my proposals are not accepted.

In fact, the bill stipulates that the road connecting Lévis, in Quebec, with U.S. Route 201 in the State of Maine, is the border line, while the whole country of Lévis is a designated area. I know a Lévis manufacturer whose plant lies 200 feet from the traffic circle of Lévis, and any carrier who would pick up goods at a distance of 200 feet on the western side of the traffic circle, even if it is in a designated area will not be entitled, according to the definition in the legislation, to a subsidy.

Consequently, I would point out to the minister, that in my opinion, the entire country of Lévis, which is a designated area, should be included in the Atlantic area. I think that this step would prevent confusion, because as I said a while ago, there are some manufacturers on both sides of the Kennedy road and we would have a manufacturer on the western side who would not obtain a subsidy, while the one who is on the eastern side would get a subsidy for goods shipped by a trucking company.

We from the Ralliement créditiste are in favour of that bill and hope that it will soon be passed.

I got in touch earlier with representatives of trucking companies who sincerely regret, that submission, could not be filed in order to state the fair claims and the needs of the trucking industry—particularly in the designated area of Lévis, in direction of the Gaspé peninsula and the Maritimes—which is in a state of stagnation at the present time.

I do hope we shall be able to bring in amendments which will help the truckers whose business in Eastern Canada is now losing ground on account of unfair competition.

Those are about the comments I wanted to make, Mr. Chairman, and I do hope, especially

[Mr. Skoberg.]

in the case of the Kennedy road, that the minister will agree to include the whole country of Lévis.

[*English*]

Mr. Bell: Mr. Chairman, first I want to place on the record my very serious personal objections to the fact that the Transport Committee is sitting in Room 307 in the West Block while the house is discussing important legislation affecting transport in the Atlantic provinces. This is outrageous. It is a situation that has not occurred in parliament for some time. To the new Minister of Transport may I say that one of his predecessors in office, Mr. Pickersgill, with all his faults would never have allowed this to happen. I do not know whether the minister himself is to blame—

Mr. Jamieson: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, and with the greatest respect I want to assure hon. members that I was completely unaware of this situation. So far as I knew this was a sort of extraordinary session of the house. I was not aware the Transport Committee was meeting at the same time. I am sure the hon. member did not mean to imply that I was.

Mr. Bell: Then I apologize to the minister, Mr. Chairman. It could be that as a new junior minister he has not been able to make his influence felt in cabinet circles. I know that the house leader has responsibility in connection with committee meetings, but I hope the minister will take a strong stand with his cabinet colleagues who may wish to shove him around. I hope he does not forget to take a tough line with some of these Upper Canadians when legislation is introduced respecting the Atlantic provinces.

I do not know whether it is an advantage to be from the Atlantic provinces and hold the transport portfolio, but for better or worse the minister now has that responsibility and it is a grave one. This is the first time I have had a chance to speak on the subject of transportation in the house since the new minister took office, and of course I wish him well. It seems that everybody does. To him I hold up the example of Mr. Pickersgill, and I say this in a serious manner. He was a good parliamentarian. He has the courage to take the bull by the horns and introduce the new National Transportation Act. That act was not what we in the Atlantic provinces wanted. For a number of reasons it did not deal with our problem. The minister has outlined those reasons. But Mr. Pickersgill did have the courage to face up to the national problem, to