

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

● (10:10 p.m.)

Protests were entered by the Regina Chamber of Commerce, the Saskatoon Board of Trade, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, my colleagues, the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) and the hon. member for Regina Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) and myself. I understand there were other protests as well. On the basis of the early acknowledgement of these protests there was some cause for hope. We waited until February 7, when a decision was reached, but that decision was disturbing, as quoted in the *Leader Post* of February 10:

Rail express rate reductions already granted to other major cities in western Canada will not be given to Regina and Saskatoon, the Express Transport Association of Canada announced Friday.

G. A. Shaw, general manager of E.T.A., said in a telegram to Regina Chamber of Commerce and Saskatoon Board of Trade that carriers are not prepared to reduce rates to Regina and Saskatoon in shipping from Toronto and Montreal.

In addition, I myself received an acknowledgement of my protest regarding action taken by the Express Transport Association in the following words:

The question of including Regina and Saskatoon in our existing list was given serious consideration by member companies. However, I regret to advise that we are not prepared to add them to our listing at the present time.

Further protests were sent by the Regina Chamber of Commerce, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and other bodies. In addition, I added my word of protest in a letter dated February 14. In my letter, I stated:

I must say I find this action most disappointing and disturbing. For my own part I cannot condone this type of discrimination against Regina and Saskatoon and I assure you I do not intend to remain silent on the question. It is this type of action on the part of railway companies which has resulted all too often in a loss of favour among the public.

Furthermore, I must say that I was disturbed by the cavalier attitude in your letter to myself and in other pronouncements on this subject. At no time have I seen a rationale or explanation of the new rate structure as it affects Regina and Saskatoon.

I would point out to you that while the transportation legislation approved by parliament in 1967 gives the railways more freedom of action in rate setting, it is now incumbent upon the railways to exercise some responsibility in the use of discretionary powers. Should the railways continue policies which have an effect such as is the case with Regina and Saskatoon in this instance, it will soon bring pressure to place more restrictions on railway rate making power.

I would urge the government to intervene to put an end to this discrimination and make it clear to the railways that this type of discriminatory practice and policy will, if continued, result in a reconsideration of the powers allowed to railways under the legislation passed in 1967.

**Mr. Yves Forest (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council):** On behalf of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer), who cannot be here tonight, I wish to inform the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton) that the rate reductions referred to were made by the Express Transport Association, effective November 11, 1968, and are applicable to shipments weighing 101 pounds up to 10,000 pounds. The justification given by the Express Transport Association is set out in the following telegram sent by its manager on February 14, 1969 to the Regina Chamber of Commerce and the Saskatoon Board of Trade:

Please refer to exchange of correspondence in respect to Express Transport Association rates between Montreal, Toronto, western Canada. These rates are an experiment to attempt to attract long haul traffic not presently handled by express carriers. For this reason the number of points were kept to a minimum; the rates as well as the results are under review to determine whether they will be continued, extended, modified or cancelled. In the meantime it is not the intention to add any further points to the tariff.

The matter is currently being looked into by the Canadian Transport Commission and as soon as the Minister of Transport has received a report from that body he will be glad to make the house aware of its contents.

AIR TRANSPORT—CASTLEGAR, B.C.—  
CONSULTATION BEFORE CHANGE  
IN SERVICE

**Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday I directed the following question to the Minister of Transport, as reported at page 5522 of *Hansard*:

Were the municipalities involved in the operation of the Castlegar airport and other airports consulted by the Canadian Transport Commission before the decision was made to authorize B.C. Air Lines to operate local services on C.P.A.'s southern run?

Then, Your Honour suggested that if there were some urgency about the question it could be discussed at the time of adjournment. The matter is not only urgent, it is of vital importance to my area and I have therefore taken this opportunity to expand on this very important problem.