

Atlantic Regional Freight Assistance Act

to the minister is, did he overlook this and would he be receptive to an amendment? If he indicates he might accept an amendment I would ask that this clause be held over until such time as I have prepared one.

Mr. Jamieson: This was not an oversight. The hon. member quite properly said the emphasis in this bill is on westbound traffic and on trucking, so it would not be of any great significance. I noted the omission immediately and discovered that this was done at the time of the terms of the union. There were reasons for it at that time which may not necessarily apply today. I do not believe anything very significant would result in terms of this legislation by including Labrador. I do not believe we could accomplish this by including it in the bill.

This problem would have to be directly related to the M.F.R.A., and we may run into questions as to whether it in fact constitutes part of the union. What I want to say to my friend is that I will direct that the federal-provincial committee which deals with the intra-matters—subsidies and the like within the region—give some consideration to this matter and extend some other form of aid, if not this form, to Labrador.

I may say there is a measure of that kind now through which considerable subsidies are paid on coastal boat shipments and that kind of thing which is outside the M.F.R.A. altogether. The best way to approach this, and I am in full accord with the intent of my hon. friend's statement, is to have the committee consider the matter to see which method would be the best. In other words, I think it might be a bit of a hollow victory to include Labrador now and discover there is nothing in the bill of any consequence in so far as benefits to the Labrador people are concerned. I will make that one of the terms of reference to the committee if the hon. member so desires.

Mr. Peddle: Would the minister compromise by saying "the province of Newfoundland" instead of "the island of Newfoundland"?

Mr. Jamieson: Such a compromise would, of course, do precisely what my hon. friend desires but which I have said is not a very useful gesture at the present time because this is expressly confined to the island of Newfoundland which is so designated in the terms of union. It does not appear to me that he would be able, and I would have to get a legal opinion on this, to alter it in that way in

view of the fact it is constitutionally embodied, if you like, in the terms of union. I do suggest to my hon. friend that the method I have advanced would be the more beneficial one for the people concerned, that is, we should get the committee to take a look at what can be done in respect of assistance in terms of freight, etc. for Labrador.

Mr. Peddle: Could I ask then that clause 2 stand temporarily while I give the matter further thought?

The Chairman: Is it agreed that clause 2 stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Clause stands.

On clause 3—*Assistance authorized.*

Mr. Thomas (Moncton): Mr. Chairman, I should like to point out to the minister that the purpose of clause 3 is to provide temporary assistance to certain truckers, but we on this side are disturbed about this clause and the bill because so many things are temporary and will have very little effect. I suppose the purpose is to increase competition between various carriers in the hope that with competition the rates will be brought down. I suggest that this is why the truckers association's initial reaction to this measure was disapproval. This will bring very limited relief to truckers in this area, and it will only apply to those truckers hauling from east to west. It will involve only two carriers in the maritimes.

Mr. Jamieson: No, 16.

Mr. Thomas (Moncton): Are there 16 carriers hauling from east to west?

Mr. Jamieson: Yes, at least 16.

Mr. Thomas (Moncton): I will accept the minister's figure, but the reaction of the truckers was that this would give only very limited relief to the industry.

Mr. Jamieson: I can only say as I have said before that this has been thoroughly considered and will presumably help the truck carriers in the region.

Mr. Thomson: Mr. Chairman, is the minister aware that if he gives more assistance in respect of vegetables coming from the maritimes the growers in Quebec and Ontario will be unhappy?