

*Department of Transport Act*

Milner was asked this question by Mr. Woods, counsel for the committee:

Q. Then the railways, under a general order or arrangements, which you have given to them, or arranged with them, they, in effect then, allocate the cars?

A. That's right.

Mr. Milner has all the authority. First he said that the wheat board had the authority and then a few pages later he said that the railway companies have the authority, that they are the people who allocate box cars. The fact is that the railway companies are allocating box cars. Donald Gordon and company are in the saddle. They are the people who are allocating box cars.

**An hon. Member:** The people's railroad.

**Mr. Argue:** The people's railroad. The people were not consulted when Donald Gordon was appointed head of the railway. We have the transport controller who apparently has no authority over Donald Gordon and no authority over the allocation of box cars because he says it is a matter for the railroads. Then there was another question put to Mr. Milner by Mr. Erb. He asked him this question:

Mr. Milner, what jurisdiction do you exercise over the box cars on tracks in the Rockies?

We have heard a lot about the shortage of box cars and the fact that demurrage was paid on certain quantities of grain in the port of Vancouver. This was Mr. Milner's answer:

I have no jurisdiction over that at all, sir.

The transport controller apparently has no authority. According to him, he is not allocating box cars. It is little wonder then that the country is in the great mess it is in now as far as the transportation of grain is concerned. Under this legislation the transport controller has complete authority to carry out any order by the governor in council for the distribution of box cars. The government can take whatever action is necessary to see that the producers of western Canada are given a square deal in the distribution of box cars. But when it comes to something that affects the welfare of the western producers the government does not use its authority. It does not instruct Donald Gordon, the head of the C.N.R., to bring about a better system of box car distribution. But if the government will not use its authority, as it has not, to bring about a better distribution of box cars in the interests of the producers there is and has not been any hesitation on the part of the government in using its authority and using threats in the case of the railway workers whenever there happens to be a discussion about increased

rates of pay or anything else having to do with benefits for the railway workers.

The Prime Minister made a statement in Toronto yesterday to the railway workers which they consider an unfortunate statement and an affront. I wish the Prime Minister were just as willing to use the authority of parliament in the interests of the producers and the assembling of grain as he apparently is in the case of the settlement of disputes involving the railway workers. I suggest to him that he should give Donald Gordon two orders at the present time, first, to distribute box cars on a fair basis and, second, to settle with the railway workers on the basis of the majority report. By so doing he will ensure labour peace in the country and will ensure a better and fairer distribution of box cars.

This legislation has much to commend it. The legislation as I have read it is adequate. The power and authority are adequate but the power and authority are not being used. It is high time that somebody in the grain business used the power and authority to provide farmers with a fair distribution of box cars so that they can deliver adequate quantities of grain and can deliver grain to the elevator of their own choice.

**Mr. Nicholson:** Mr. Chairman, I feel that the Minister of Transport or the Minister of Trade and Commerce should make a few comments after the very constructive suggestions made by the hon. member for Assiniboia. In my opinion it just is not good enough to laugh at the situation when in the province of Saskatchewan we have a one-bushel quota at 20 per cent of the shipping points whereas in Manitoba they have a one-bushel quota for about one-quarter of one per cent and in Alberta a one-bushel quota for 3 per cent.

I realize there are people in this country who do not like the kind and quality of government we have in Saskatchewan, but there are people in Saskatchewan who support the federal government and I think it is undemocratic to put the people of our province in the position on the 4th of April, 1956 where, after having incurred all the necessary expenses in connection with farming operations, they find that at 205 points in the province out of a total of 1,107 there is only a one-bushel quota.

I think the suggestion of the Minister of Trade and Commerce that the provincial government has fallen down with respect to its responsibility is at least two months out of date. I hope it will not be very long until the roads in Saskatchewan are as good as they previously were. However, if there is a lot of space available in the province, why does the minister limit us to a one-bushel