

*Western Grain Transportation Act*

Let us take a look at Motion No. 43, Mr. Speaker. I suggest to the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) that he consider whether he would like to see the Canadian Wheat Board awarded. The Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) asked what awards we could have. As the Canadian Wheat Board is a Crown agency, I should think that the Government has the ability to award it for performance that has been met and I do not see anything wrong with putting that in the Bill. Even with the possibility that those awards would not be given in the future, it should be included to facilitate matters. Those awards could be made in several ways, such as by the Government purchasing cars and allowing the Canadian Wheat Board to control them. In turn, there would be a benefit to the farmers who use the Board.

● (1240)

Motion No. 45 was proposed by this Party in committee. We chose the figure of 20 per cent of the volume-related variable costs. That is really the full contribution to constant costs. We thought that because of the investment made by the taxpayers of Canada and because of the requirement in the Bill that producers pay additional funds for the movement of grain, the railroad companies should fulfil what is basically a verbal commitment. Everything we have as a commitment from the railroads is basically a verbal commitment that they "shall" expend funds given to them by the taxpayers of Canada and the producers to improve the rail system. There is nothing in the Bill that requires the railroads to invest in any special area.

We have statements from the presidents of the Canadian railroads to the effect that funds provided by the taxpayers of Canada for the upgrading of the rail system will be included in general revenue. If that general revenue will allow the railroad companies to diversify into oil companies and oil exploration or to establish larger hotel chains or enter the trucking business, as some Members of the NDP have suggested, then the Bill should provide for a sanction on the railroads that would require them to put that investment into structures designed to help them meet the commitment assigned to them by the Administrator.

At 20 per cent of variable costs, which is the full contribution to constant costs, in 1983-84 there could have been a sanction of \$130 million out of \$790 million; in 1984-85 a sanction of \$142 million out of \$893 million; and in 1985-86 a sanction of \$150 million out of \$987 million. Those figures relate to the removal of the contribution of constant costs that the railroads would receive. They are, in fact, guaranteed profits to the railroads. If they are to be given authority to allocate those funds at their discretion, we think the penalty for not doing so in a proper manner should be their profit. In effect, they would still be able to invest, but if they invested improperly, they would not have a profit.

Motion No. 46 in the name of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) is basically the same as Motion No. 45, although it is a little more complicated. I suggest that if we want to simplify a Bill as complicated as Bill C-155, the best

way to express sanction would be by a straight percentage point of the fixed number. The motion proposed by the Hon. Member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer) would simplify the Bill and impose sanctions on the railroads as required by taxpayers and producers.

I should like to return to Motion No. 44. The reason for non-pecuniary sanctions on all system participants other than the railroads is quite apparent. In committee the Hon. Member for Regina West presented an amendment and then, as has happened to all of us, when the ramifications of it became apparent, he did not vote for it. He had suggested that sanctions be applied to elevator companies through a certain percentage of handling charges, elevation charges or storage charges to be fixed by the Administrator. It is quite apparent that, in turn, that would be a pecuniary charge on producers as the elevator companies would have to go to the Canadian Grain Commission and ask for an increase in elevator handling charges because of the fine. The extra charge would be handed on to the producer.

**Mr. Benjamin:** They would not get it.

**Mr. McKnight:** I hear the Hon. Member for Regina West saying that they would not get it. Then I ask him why he did not vote for his amendment in committee. It is apparent that pecuniary sanctions cannot be placed on producers but awards can be given to the Crown agency, the Canadian Wheat Board, which in turn would benefit producers.

We will support Motion No. 44 and Motion No. 45, Mr. Speaker, and we will consider supporting some of the other amendments. I hope that Members of the Government and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister will explain what would be wrong with non-pecuniary sanctions being applied to all system participants other than the railroad companies.

In that vein, Mr. Speaker, I must say that the last time I was on my feet in the House the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) was rising to speak on another matter. I had hoped he was rising to enlighten the House on why the Government would not support Motions No. 39 and No. 40 which would protect the Canadian Wheat Board. I hope the Minister or his Parliamentary Secretary will tell us why the Bill should not include a clause specifying non-pecuniary sanctions to system participants other than the railroads.

**Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on Motions Nos. 41 through 45. I come from the Province of Alberta which sends 21 Members to Parliament. In the last election it sent 21 Members of the Progressive Conservative Party to Ottawa. In this Chamber today we have a Government Party with 21 Members from eight Provinces and two Territories. As well as the debate on the Constitution, which was originally an attack on the regions of Canada and not just on the West, there was the energy program which was an attack on the West, VIA Rail which damaged much of Canada but did a lot of damage to tourism in western Canada, and now there is the Crow rate. With these measures there