

Mr. Mazankowski: That might be the best thing that could happen.

Mr. Parker: Mr. Speaker, I have several questions for the Minister—for the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski).

Mr. McDermid: You were right the first time.

Mr. Parker: My first question to the former Minister of Transport, concerns a matter we were discussing in the debate on Bill C-155. We put forward a proposal, which possibly would have avoided this Opposition Day discussion, in which we called for the separation of that Bill. We wanted the Bill to be separated so that we would have a separate one dealing with rail transportation and the railways could live up to their commitments. We could have tried to deal with that in a separate vote. We also wanted the matter of the releasing of the coal lands dealt with in a separate vote and we wanted the grain freight rates dealt with separately. We could have dealt with that in a very serious way. The Conservatives did not allow that or would not support it.

With regard to VIA Rail, the Hon. Member mentioned its upgrading from Edmonton to Jasper to Kamloops. Would he see that as seriously affecting the Transcontinental train which runs from Calgary to Vancouver? It would have very serious effects if it were not maintained as a railway transportation system across Canada.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, to answer the first part of the question, there were so many rather frivolous and phoney amendments introduced to Bill C-155 by the NDP that most of them could not be taken seriously. I am not sure whether the Hon. Member would categorize that particular amendment as one of the package of serious amendments or one which was frivolous. What disappointed Members of this Party very much was that we were unable to debate the Bill fully. We had a whole host of other amendments with which we wanted to proceed.

Mr. Dion: There were two years of obstruction in committee.

Mr. Mazankowski: The Hon. Member referred to two years of obstruction.

Mr. Dion: One year.

Mr. Mazankowski: That is absolute nonsense. He knows not of what he speaks. The Bill was introduced in May and it passed the House in November. That was the only period of time in which the issue was really dealt with by the House of Commons. The fact of the matter is that there were many frivolous amendments. I can tell you that our purpose from day one—

Mr. Dion: Was to do nothing.

Mr. Mazankowski: —was to improve and protect the interests of the farmers.

Order Paper Questions

Mr. Dion: You were doing nothing. I was there.

Mr. Mazankowski: If we were doing nothing, how come Hon. Members across the way accepted 55 amendments proposed by the Conservative Party?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: Even the back-benchers are engaged in this political manipulation and ballyhoo. They do not speak from facts; they speak from political instinct.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): I regret to advise the Hon. Member that the time for questions and comments has expired. For debate—

Mr. Malone: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): On a point of order, the Hon. Member for Crowfoot (Mr. Malone).

Mr. Malone: Mr. Speaker, would you seek unanimous consent to extend the time for questioning so that more of us will have a chance to get good wisdom from the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski)?

Mr. Dion: No.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): I clearly heard a “no”, but I could put it again.

An Hon. Member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): The answer is no. For debate, the Hon. Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Order, please. If the Minister of Transport will excuse me, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Hopkins) is rising on a point of order.

● (1250)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, when I listed the questions that would be answered today, I believe I included Question No. 268. I want to correct that statement because Question No. 268 has not been answered today. I would repeat that those that were answered today were Nos. 14, 645 and 689.