

Extension of Hours

its merits and where people with an interest in the legislation can have their say. We are asking that it go to committee where people who want to address it have more flexibility than they have in this Chamber.

I have heard that farmers are busy between now and October and thank God there are people in the country who are working so enthusiastically. If the changes in the Crow proposal are as earth-shaking as the NDP would have us believe, I put it to you that the farmers will find time to do their work in the fields and to send representatives to put their case before the committee.

I was touched at the appeal of the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain to the Tories, as I am sure the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) was, when he said, "We are prepared to join with the Conservatives—come with us". I ask my good friend from Bow River how he could not have walked down and joined hands. I would warn him before he jumps at the invitation to make sure he understands the implications. It is an invitation to return to 1910, to 1915 or to 1920.

We recognize that the Crow is a very emotional issue. That alone is not an excuse to treat it as a sacred cow, however. It is all the more reason to muster courage to do the right thing, and that is, not to walk away or hide our heads in the sand as the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain wants. That is why I am glad the Hon. Member for Bow River has kept his head, as he usually does. I hope very few will accept the invitation from the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain to return to 1910. How does he reconcile his position on the Crow issue with the interests of his constituents who stand to gain from the changes proposed in the legislation?

Mr. McCain: Mr. Speaker, would the enthusiastic Member who just sat down be willing to support the concept of reasoned amendment to the legislation to improve it for the farmers for whom he pleaded so hard?

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I would. That is why my colleagues and I are so anxious to get the Bill to committee. One of the reasons for committee stage is to allow Members to scrutinize legislation at close range in a more informal setting and determine whether it can be improved. If the Hon. Member has proposals that would legitimately improve it, I will support his amendment.

● (1650)

Mr. McCain: Mr. Speaker, would the Hon. Member then persuade his caucus to persuade the Minister, in turn, to accept the amendments which have the support of different Parties of this House so that the matter could then be settled in reason instead of in petulance as at present?

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I would take exception to the last word or two of the Hon. Member's remarks about there being petulance. There has been some heated debate because it is a very emotional issue. However, once we get it beyond second reading, we would like to get it into committee where we can look at those amendments in the light of day and see if

they will do all the good things which the Hon. Member suggests they will do. Mr. Speaker, no one has said to the Hon. Member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain) that we will not accept any amendments, and I challenge him to say otherwise. What we have said consistently is that we should bring it to committee and in committee Hon. Members will have the same freedom they always have in committee to propose amendments and then have them dealt with.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's (Mr. Simmons) crying and complaining about how he wants to get out of here. It seems to me his constituents are paying their income taxes for him to be here working, no matter how long Parliament has to sit. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman if he would oppose using every method possible under the rules of the House, whether or not he is on the Government side of the House, which would cost the people in his Province \$600 million more in freight charges between now and the end of this decade? Would the Hon. Member agree that he also would fight every way he could to prevent any kind of legislation which would do that to the people in his Province?

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to address myself to the issue of whether or not the presumption in the question is accurate. It is a whole debate in itself as to whether or not that figure of \$600 million is anywhere near reality. I have already answered the other part of his question when I appealed to the New Democratic Party to stop being petulant, stop using delay tactics, and just use everything within the rules to get its views across. That is why we have rules. That is why we have the various Standing Orders, including the one we are dealing with today, for that matter. I have invited them to do this, but I do not believe they need an invitation from me because they have privileges in this House which allow them to use all the rules within the Standing Orders. However, Mr. Speaker, I made the point earlier that it does not allow that Party to be parliamentary terrorists. That is what the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain gave notice of today when he indicated he was going to obstruct. I say that his constituents, including the steel workers, who will benefit from changes in the Crow legislation, did not send him here to obstruct. They sent him here to fight vociferously within the rules. I will always defend to the death his right to do that, within the rules. There will be no argument from me on that issue.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member if he has read the response of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) to questions on the Order Paper that to date he has received over 37,000 letters and telegrams from people in western Canada asking for retention of the statutory grain rates. They were from all over Canada, for that matter, but most of them were from western Canada. Only 69 of these persons were against the retention of the statutory grain rate. Also there are over 50,000 signatures on petitions of various