

Western Grain Transportation Act

Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), the spokesman for the NDP on matters of transport, but I urge Hon. Members to determine whether it is in fact their intention to continue on points of order. If so, I think the time has come when the Chair should indicate that Hon. Members could be asked to be somewhat briefer. At least we might proceed that far to brevity.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I will try to be brief. I think it is important that I get on the record my concerns regarding the preliminary recommendations made by Madam Speaker. I want to deal specifically with Motion No. 20 and Clause 62 of the Bill regarding the coal lands. They are situated in my riding of Kootenay East-Revelstoke, 50,000 acres of them.

Clause 62 of the original Bill reads:

Notwithstanding the Crow's Nest Pass Act and any agreement—

This is the part I take exception to:

—any agreement made pursuant thereto, the Government of Canada may hold, dispose of or otherwise deal with the lands it selected under Paragraph 1(i.) of that Act . . . and on any conditions it thinks fit.

The Provinces have the right to be able to develop—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order. I have to indicate to the Hon. Member that what is happening now is precisely the problem to which I was attempting to refer a few moments ago. The Chair has respected the right of all Hon. Members to rise on points of order throughout the entire afternoon. In some cases, Members have used a considerable part of their right to make a point of order to address themselves, in some degree or other, to the substance of the Bill. I am now asking Hon. Members if it would be appropriate and if the mood of the House is such that the Chair ought to suggest that points of order ought to be relevant to the procedures of the House. That is the issue in front of the Hon. Member who now has the floor.

This is not an opportunity to discuss the merits of the Bill. I think it is in order at this time to point out that points of order ought to be restricted to matters pertaining to the order of debate, the Standing Orders and the rulings of the Speaker.

Mr. Parker: Mr. Speaker, I will go directly to that point of order. I was trying to build up to it.

When the committee was travelling across the country it heard a submission from the Province of British Columbia. I think it is important that this amendment be able to stand, and I just want to outline very briefly the concerns of the Province of British Columbia as to why the amendment should stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I have to indicate to the Hon. Member that the merits of a political issue, if I may refer to it that way, or the merits of debate concerning a particular Bill, are not essentially the same thing as points of order. It makes no difference whether the Hon. Member's argument is the most justified political argument on the face of the earth; it stands as political argument. What the House is now involved in is points of order on the Speaker's ruling. This is not the

time or place to make arguments as to the substance of the Bill.

I know I am becoming difficult in one sense because the Chair has recognized many other Hon. Members throughout the day. However, I think it has reached the point where Hon. Members should at least consider the request of the Chair to make sure that the debate on points of order is restricted to the technicalities of points of order, not the substance of the Bill.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, you are almost entirely right but Members should not only consider the position of the Chair, they should follow the position of the Chair. That is why we have a Chair. When Members are discussing presentations or representations made before the committee rather than discussing the procedural acceptability of these amendments, they are clearly out of order.

Mr. Parker: Mr. Speaker, the problem I am having is the title of the Bill. It says:

An Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof.

Motion No. 20 has been turned down by the Speaker on a preliminary basis. It is imperative to me as a Member of Parliament to discuss this legislation or this amendment in the House. This Bill will call upon me as a Member of Parliament to vote for \$450 billion worth of coal reserves to be turned over to the federal Government. If I want to vote against that, I have to vote against some very important improvements to rail transportation in my area which every one of us feels must be done.

The title of the Bill has caused the problem. I say to you with all sincerity that I think it is an unjust act not even to consider that amendment which deals with coal, which has nothing to do with the transportation of grain or—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne) is rising on an intervening point of order.

● (1640)

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, obviously, not only does the Hon. Member misunderstand the point of procedure but he also misunderstands the Bill. The Bill does not turn the coal lands in British Columbia over to the federal Government. The federal Government already owns those coal lands. All the Bill does is to lift the freeze in price, and he is arguing—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order. I am having as much problem with that intervention as the one preceding it. The difficulty for the Chair is that over a period of time it appears appropriate to accept interventions by Hon. Members which are known and called by those Hon. Members as points of order, because it gives the House an opportunity to review the ruling by Madam Speaker and to determine whether or not there are certain points of parliamentary procedure which need to be addressed.