

Western Grain Transportation Act

people in Canada and the rail companies bought boxcars even back in the regime of 1878 to 1882, as they do now. Back in those days at least the rail companies purchased the cars to transport the commodities throughout the country, whereas now the rail companies do not buy the cars any more. I am sure you are aware of that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member is making an historical point. The amendments before us are very specific, amendments Nos. 55 and 56. If the Hon. Member has not read the amendments before the House, the Chair is quite prepared to bring them to his attention to assist him in focusing his argument. But in fairness to the House, the Hon. Member is under some obligation to demonstrate how what happened a century or so ago is relevant to this specific amendment proposed by his Party at this point.

Mr. Anguish: Mr. Speaker, the rail lines in Canada came into existence during this time. It was the era preceding the setting of the statutory rate which we are reviewing in this House now, a rate we view as our historic right. I do not see how you can—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member is making general comments and is not dealing with specific amendments. The rule of the House is very clear. Hon. Members at report stage are invited to speak specifically to the amendments before the House. The Hon. Member refuses to do so. If the Hon. Member will not deal with the amendments, the Chair will have no alternative but to recognize another Hon. Member.

Mr. Anguish: Mr. Speaker, it is a question of control over the rolling stock, over the boxcars and the hopper cars that should be under the control of the Canadian Wheat Board and are not now. I do not know how much more relevant I can be than to quote from a document which was the forerunner to the setting of the historic freight rate which the farmers, the producers in western Canada have appreciated for a long period of time and view as their right. Thus I referred to the document. I will not continue the quotation. I will accept your ruling. I also state that there are facts in that document from which I would like to quote that are relevant to this debate on Bill C-155. I would say with all due respect to you, Mr. Speaker, that I do not need to be told what the amendments are.

I represent an agricultural riding, where agriculture is the number one industry. The amendments we are debating here are both put forward by the New Democratic Party. The reason we put them forward is that the railway companies no longer buy boxcars or hopper cars. In fact, I am not sure which rail company it is, but the last time either the CNR or the CPR bought boxcars was in the early 1950s. The other company has not bought boxcars since the late 1940s, prior to this Member being born. It is no wonder that we are concerned that these amendments must be put in place. Who has bought the boxcars recently?

Mr. Benjamin: Hopper cars.

Mr. Anguish: Who has bought the cars for the movement of grain in western Canada? My colleague has just brought to my attention it is not boxcars but hopper cars. Of course, I know that. But hopper cars are fairly new on the scene, Mr. Speaker. We did not have hopper cars in 1951. But who bought those hopper cars?

First, the federal Government bought some hopper cars, not the rail companies in Canada. It sure was not the Conservatives under an administration of theirs that forced the railway companies to meet their obligations, nor under the Liberals. Both of those Parties have been negligent; a curse on both their houses. The taxpayers of Canada purchased those hopper cars. More hopper cars were purchased. The Government of Saskatchewan purchased some hopper cars. The Government of Alberta purchased some hopper cars because it knew the vital interests that farmers played in the economies of those Provinces. They bought those hopper cars so the producers could move their grain to markets, to ports, because the rail companies failed to meet their obligations.

There is a third group which has purchased hopper cars in recent years. This is the real thrust of our amendment. The people who have purchased those hopper cars are the producers themselves through the Canadian Wheat Board. The Canadian Wheat Board purchased the cars because they thought that if the producers at least purchased their own cars, the rail companies would have a great deal more obligation to haul the grain out to markets where it could be sold. But it has not seemed to work that way.

The Conservatives did not do anything when they were in power to ensure that the grain would move better. The Liberals have not done anything to ensure that grain will move better now that they are in government. Even if the two of them together formed a coalition tomorrow, which they should because they are the same Party, I doubt whether the two minds coming together could move the grain any better than it moves at the present time, Mr. Speaker.

The thrust of our amendment, Motions Nos. 55 and 56 to Bill C-155, first is to give control over railroad grain cars and the allocation of them to the Canadian Wheat Board. If they have the responsibility to deliver that grain to the ports, as the farmers really do because they produce it and the Wheat Board orders it, they must also have the authority to make sure that those cars are in place when the farmers need them to move their grain to where it should be located, or to its final destination.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair hesitates to interrupt the Hon. Member. He was allowed three and a half minutes extra for the interruptions and he has had a fair allocation of time. The Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom).

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, we now have Motions Nos. 55 and 56, proposed by the Member for Regina-West (Mr. Benjamin), and these two motions are very important to us in Western Canada because according to