

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 21, 1983

The House met at 11 a.m.

• (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION ACT

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH

The House resumed from Monday, June 20, 1983, consideration of the motion of Mr. Pepin that Bill C-155, an Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and the Motion of Mr. Lachance (p. 26521).

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton South): Mr. Speaker, once more we open up this debate on the Crow following a day, yesterday, that had its high moments and low moments.

Mr. Friesen: Mostly low.

Mr. Roche: I think it was mostly low—

Mr. Smith: Except for your speech, Benno.

Mr. Roche: —when our friends in other parts of the House intervened.

Today I want to start out by expressing real concern on the part of the West. I would observe that an urban Member of Parliament is speaking, because we want to emphasize the point that this is not just an agricultural question, although it is certainly that. It is not just a question of transportation, although it is certainly that. It is not just a western question, although it is certainly that. But it is a national question, and every Member of Parliament who has concern for the development of transportation and agricultural policies which will benefit not only our own people here in Canada but also the world, which needs the grain that Canada is able to produce, all Members of Parliament who have those concerns want to enter this debate. We want to enter it especially because of the form of closure or whatever name applies to the motion now before us to cut off this debate at a time when the Canadian people are expecting us here in Parliament to represent their interests.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the Bill before us, Bill C-155, has the same potential for hurting our national unity and our economy as did the constitutional Bill, the National Energy Program, the Government's economic policies and its failure to honour pledges to western Canada through the Western Development Fund. This Bill before us has the same potential

for wrecking unity and hurting people directly in the most severe economic ways. To limit the debate in the manner that the Government is doing is reprehensible. So we are here, Mr. Speaker, attacking not only the principle of this Bill but the manner in which it is being railroaded through the House of Commons.

We are going to continue our discussions, our protests, and our representations on behalf of the people of Canada who do not deserve to have the Crow, the Magna Carta of the West, destroyed. The Bill is as important to us as are language and cultural considerations important to the Members from Quebec and all those debates that we have been through. Throughout several years in the House we have heard of the need to satisfy the people of Quebec, and the whole question involving French Canadians. I say to Your Honour that what we are wrestling with now is a question of equal importance.

• (1110)

Since 1980 we have seen the Government using time allocation and closure measures some 22 times, 22 times in the life of this single, never ending session of Parliament. I believe that not only is it an insult to Parliamentarians who are here trying to represent the interests of their constituents, but it is also a very sad comment on how the Government is treating Parliament itself.

There is perhaps a special impetus felt by the prairie Members of Parliament to represent the interests of western Canada, because those interests are obviously not being represented by the Government Members since, to begin with, they only have two west of the Lakehead. In the debate, I have not heard much input from those two Hon. Members on behalf of western Canada. Naturally, it falls to western Members, who are legitimately concerned with the interests of their people, to continue the fight.

We cannot help but feel that it is western Canada that is especially being victimized by the Government's high-handed tactics. I want to ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether you could imagine the furor which would result should the Government decide to rip apart the auto pact, which is Ontario's economic mainstay, so perfunctorily. Would the Government have proceeded with such abandon to make wholesale changes to its bilingual policy, which is Quebec's lifeblood? Consider the care and attention which are paid to the Atlantic region's fisheries sector via the Kirby Report.

I believe that those instances that I have mentioned here just in passing illustrate the depth of certain questions with regard