

Western Grain Transportation Act

of potash by about 150 per cent and our exports of coal by about 400 per cent.

Now is the time for the railways to be entering a period of modernization. They could upgrade their system and build the equipment they will need, such as hopper cars, engines and signal systems. Now is the time for the railways to be modernized and upgraded. This would mean implementing a massive job creation program. Without it they will not be able to move the increased sales of grain, potash, coal and lumber we expect to see in the next ten or 15 years.

We say that that can be done while retaining the Crowsnest Pass rate for grain farmers. We believe it will cost Canadian taxpayers no more than the present plan of the Government and would create more than 100,000 new jobs in the next ten years, many of which would be in railway shops and plants in my City of Winnipeg. We want to stop the continuing policy which we have had for many years under both Liberal and Conservative Governments of handouts of money to the railways with no return to the public. We believe we should pay the railways proven out-of-pocket expenses—I emphasize that, not the kind of inflated figures we get from the railways—for hauling grain.

I point out that in 1983 we paid CN and CP \$380 million. In return for the money we paid to those railway companies, the Government should take an equity share. In return for a specific capital investment in railway upgrading, in the last year we paid \$550 million. If we took an equity share in CPR for the money we have given to it, we would get back part of the profits it earns, profits which are and will be very substantial. We would require the railways to maintain their investment. We have seen companies in Canada and the United States take public money and not use it for the primary purpose for which it was given, but use it for—

• (1250)

[Editor's note: At this point the electricity supply to the Chamber was interrupted.]

Some Hon. Members: One o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but his time has expired.

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in this debate this afternoon—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Perhaps the Hon. Member can wait for a few seconds until we see what the problem is.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Why not call it one o'clock and then we can get this place fixed up?

Mr. Murta: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to speak over the noise in the background. I wish to make a few comments on what we all believe to be the closing stages of second reading debate before the Bill goes to committee. Hopefully the

Members of the Transport Committee will take a good, long, hard look at the Bill throughout the rest of June and during the month of July.

I wish to deal briefly with two matters. First, the whole debate which has been going on for some period of time is not about nationalization, as the former speaker indicated. It does not have any part in the subject matter we are talking about today.

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know this noise is not at every desk in this House, but certainly in this part of the Chamber the noise is intolerable. We cannot hear the Hon. Member speak. Would it not make more sense to call it one o'clock and get the electrical problem attended to?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): The Chair will inquire from Hon. Members whether there is a disposition to call it one o'clock.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Murta: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Keeper: We cannot hear you.

Mr. Benjamin: We cannot hear him.

Mr. Murta: I guess I have about seven or eight minutes left.

As I was saying before the interruption, what we have been talking about here for some length of time has not been nationalization of another railway or anything along that line. This in the mind of western Canadians—

Mr. Lewycky: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I cannot hear what the Hon. Member is saying. I honestly cannot discern what the Member is saying because of the noise. Maybe it is greater here than where other Members are sitting. I propose that we call it one o'clock.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) has a right to make his speech without any interference. You can hear the noise. The microphone and the sound system have all gone to hell. I do not know what it is like at the other end of the Chamber, but we cannot hear the Member speaking, and we cannot hear you, Mr. Speaker. Why are we sitting? Surely this is not in accordance with proper decorum and order in the House. Get somebody in here and repair the problem. Let us call it one o'clock and the Hon. Member can make his speech later.

Mr. Malone: Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that anything that would get close to the NDP would all go to hell.

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Crowfoot (Mr. Malone) just rose and made a point with regard to the NDP. I am sorry but we could not hear what he said in this part of the House. This is not the way to carry on the business of the House.