

Western Grain Transportation Act

to speak to the amendment put forward by my colleague on this side of the House, the Hon. Member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid), which is Motion No. 152. Finally, I would like to make some additional comments on a few of the amendments put forward on behalf of the Opposition Parties. I believe we would be in a position to make some favourable comments on them and perhaps be able to help the Chair make a decision in that area. If that particular procedure is acceptable to the Chair, I will proceed. First, to deal with the matter of—

Madam Speaker: Order. I would really prefer the Hon. Minister to discuss these amendments according to groupings. As I see now, the Hon. Minister intends to go through all of the amendments on which he would like to speak. That, I believe, would be confusing to everyone.

Mr. Nielsen: No.

Madam Speaker: If the Minister is now going to speak first, perhaps he could choose to speak on an amendment or group of amendments where the same arguments are relevant. Then I will let other Hon. Members speak on those particular amendments. I can then have complete explanations at least on a group of amendments.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, I said in my previous intervention that the suggestion made by the Chair just today makes eminent sense. If we had established previously that that was the desire of the Chair, it would have been a good suggestion—had we known five days ago when we started preparing. But what the Chair is now asking us to do is to toss aside that five days of preparation, with what has been sprung on us just now.

Quite frankly, I could more easily follow the Minister if he proceeds as he suggests. But I intend to follow the wish of the Chair and try to keep within those groupings as far as I can. However, the Chair will, I am sure, show some leniency if I am not able to do that in all cases because my submissions and arguments have been prepared. They have been in the course of preparation for some five days, and I heard this suggestion just this morning. I am sure the Minister will follow that course as well, as far as he can. Right now, I am sure I can follow him more intelligently if he proceeds as he has suggested.

Madam Speaker: Yes, indeed. There might have been some indication in the way in which I grouped the arguments in my preliminary ruling. However, it is a rare occasion when both the Minister and the Opposition House Leader agree on a procedure to be followed—

Mr. Nielsen: That is the way the day started.

Madam Speaker: I suppose the Chair would be placing itself in a very strange position if it were to insist on opposing that. I suggested a plan which I thought was logical and which would lead to orderly debate. However, if disorderly debate—if I may qualify it that way—or any other way of debating some-

thing is made easier by whatever plans Hon. Members have, I am willing to go along with that, and I will reorganize the arguments in my office once I have heard them.

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you for your judgment and discretion. You indicated that this day began with a rare note of unanimity. We are now continuing. I hope we can find some way of bottling that essence when we get to the debate on this Bill and thereby, perhaps, we could get it all concluded by six o'clock tonight.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

An Hon. Member: Dream on!

Mr. Axworthy: It was a try, anyway. When you are on a good roll, you might as well keep going. The first amendment, Madam Speaker, which was proposed at report stage by the Government is Motion No. 14. It deals with the definition of grain and amends the Bill. I have read your ruling on this motion. I think it is clear you feel this is a substantive amendment to the interpretive Clause. I believe, as you quite rightly say, that according to a strict interpretation of the rules it would not normally be accepted under the procedure. However, I would like to make the case to you that what we are in fact doing in this particular motion is simply responding to a substantive part of the Bill which has already been accepted by the Chair under Motion No. 164, which gives the Governor in Council the right to add grains as part of Schedule I. That is simply a way of allowing Cabinet, the Governor in Council, to put forward additional specialty crops under the schedule, which would make them eligible for payment under the Crow regime. In order to make that happen, as you have already approved under Motion No. 164, we need to alter somewhat the definition under this motion in the interpretive area. All we are really doing under this motion is enabling the Governor in Council to include this definition of grain as part of the scheduling and, therefore, make it eligible for that rule.

I would only say, Madam Speaker, that this is partly the kind of result I saw taking place in committee where that flexibility was being shown and where some of the interpretations in the Bill, because they have consequence back to the substance, and vice versa, have to be tied together. I would hope, Madam Speaker, that you might accept that argument. I believe it might have the general acceptance of Hon. Members on the other side of the House. It would certainly not in any way change the substance, intent or meaning of the Bill. It would just facilitate the operation of the Governor in Council in this particular respect.

The second matter with which I would like to deal are two motions which are linked together, that is Motion No. 74 and Motion No. 157. Motion No. 157 is really the operative clause because it is dealing with the so-called safety net proposition. That was included by my predecessor in this portfolio as of May 10 as a way of providing a stronger guarantee of protection for farmers against any potential income loss if there were to be a drastic decline in the price of grain or a drastic increase in the cost of grain. The real question is, does it change the