

Western Grain Transportation Act

investments and on fixed costs or constant costs to be linked to the Government's request or requirement of the railways. In fact, guarantees of investment should be linked by the Government to the investment of the railways and the amount they are paid from capital investments. This is covered in Section 55 which requires certain payments to the railways, gives the Government power to hold back certain amounts of money from them and requires them to fulfil their commitments on track maintenance, branch lines or any other requirement to enable them to operate efficiently. We are asking that the investments the railways are supposed to be making should be established relative to the returns they receive from investments, capital maintenance and fixed costs.

Clause 29 of the Bill contains a nebulous commitment on the part of railways to fulfil the requirements to make their operations viable. Motion No. 50 spells out the amounts which can be reasonably expected of investment by the railways. Ordinarily we would ask why this would be necessary. People who have lived in the West and have dealt with the railways know that it is necessary for a specific amount to be included. Over the years a considerable amount of taxpayers' money has been spent supposedly for upgrading railways. For example, a considerable amount was designated specifically to branch line rehabilitation, much of which was never spent. A considerable amount was designated to improve rail cars, much of which was never spent. Consequently, we cannot trust that the railways will use taxpayers' money for the purposes it was given and demand this kind of guarantee.

Also it is important to recognize that statements of intent to invest are produced on a yearly basis under the Act, but they do not commit the railways to making any kind of continued investment. At the beginning of the year they can say that they intend to do something, but within the statement there is no guarantee that they will fulfil the commitment. Our motion suggests that we want a guarantee relative to the money they are obtaining in subsidies from the Government. That is what we call them. They are subsidies because they are relative to the amount of investments made in railways in the past. If they are paid to railways, we want a guarantee that they will be used to develop a good system for many years to come.

As the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) suggested, we will need several billion dollars a year for the next 30 years to be assured that we will have a railway system which is capable of moving grain and all other necessary products in western Canada over the next few years to develop the economy of the West to the extent we feel it should be developed.

● (1740)

The history of public aid to the railways, which Bill C-155 will perpetuate, will continue. The railways will receive continued aid and a guaranteed annual income. The money that flows to the railroads, which is supposed to be returned to the public, and services and guarantees of service do not necessarily occur. As it stands, Bill C-155 does nothing to improve this

position. We have put forward this amendment to improve that.

As a matter of history, let us put on the record the kind of public assistance that Canadian Pacific Railways has taken from the taxpayers of Canada in the last few years. The Royal Commission on Railways and Transportation said the Canadian Pacific received the following public assistance as of 1916: Railways and services completed by the Government, \$37 million; cash aid, \$66 million; value of unsold lands, \$119 million; returns from the land sold minus cost of improvement, \$55 million; for a total of identifiable aid in a matter of approximately 30 years of something over \$279 million.

If you adjust that and other presentations to the CPR for longer periods of time to present value, those investments would be \$8.3 billion. We feel very strongly that we must have some guarantee that further money from the taxpayers will be returned to us in some kind of service. If after having received \$8 billion they still give the kind of service they do, there is no way that we can guarantee that we will not receive the same kind of service in the future unless we define very definitely in this Act the kind of investment they must make each year relative to the subsidies they receive. We are not asking them to take their own money and put it back in. We are giving them this money and we want them to use it on building up the railways so that they will be better and we can be guaranteed some kind of service.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil):

That this sitting of the House continue beyond the ordinary hour of adjournment for the purpose of considering the report stage of Bill C-155.

I move that under the provisions of Standing Order 8(4)(a).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The motion seems to be in order. I will put the question. Those Members who object to the motion will please rise in their place. There being no Members rising in their place to object to the motion, the motion is deemed to have been carried.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I thank Hon. Members for allowing additional time to debate the very important substantive amendments that have yet to be debated, thanks to the New Democratic Party who denied earlier the House the opportunity of debating some of the very fundamental, integral and vital parts of this Bill.

Perhaps through the extension of time we will have an opportunity to debate the safety net, the method of payment, the farmer's ability to pay, the B.C. coal lands and other matters of that nature. We in this Party have come here to debate this issue to try to work toward a better Bill and a more satisfactory solution than that which is contained in Bill C-155. We hope that the people of Canada will recognize that throughout the course of our deliberations ours has not been one of obstruction and stonewalling, but one of constructive criticism and providing constructive proposals.

An Hon. Member: Shame.