

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 20, 1983

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION ACT

#### MEASURE TO ESTABLISH

The House resumed from Tuesday, October 18, 1983 consideration of Bill C-155, an Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Transport; and Motions Nos. 39 (Mr. Gustafson) and 40 (Mr. Benjamin).

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** When the matter was last in debate, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) had the floor. In his absence the Chair will recognize any other Hon. Member on Motions Nos. 39 and 40.

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Mr. Speaker, today as the Chair has indicated, we are resuming debate on Motions Nos. 39 and 40. The motions are very similar. One is in the name of the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson), my friend in the Conservative Party, and the other one is in the name of my seatmate, the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin). Both of them are amendments that I would consider pro-producer, pro-farmer, which would strengthen things for the farmers of this country. Both motions would amend Clause 19.

● (1110)

The motion of the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) reads:

The provisions of this Part respecting the duties and functions of the Administrator do not restrict the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board under the Canadian Wheat Board Act to make available the quantities and types of grain necessary to achieve sales commitments on behalf of, and in the interests of, producers.

The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) says a similar thing in his amendment, but according to our legal advice, Motion No. 40 would make it a bit more certain and stronger in terms of the wording on behalf of farmers. It is also the wording suggested by the Canadian Wheat Board. I know Mr. Speaker is a distinguished lawyer and understands the law very well. Motion No. 40 of the Hon. Member for Regina West is the better motion. It is the one preferred by the Wheat

Board. Of the two motions, it is the one that should be accepted.

If the House sees fit not to accept it, of course the fallback position could be Motion No. 39 moved by the Hon. Member for Assiniboia. Since we are trying to protect the Canadian Wheat Board, I suggest that we accept the motion which the Wheat Board is recommending and that the Wheat Board would like to see implemented.

Clause 19 of Bill C-155 refers to the functions and duties of the Administrator. The Administrator of the Senior Grain Transportation Committee has considerable power over the future of grain handling and grain movement in our country. He has considerable power in terms of the movement of grain, the quality of grain, the purchasing of grain, the selling of grain and the like. We want to ensure that the powers of the Wheat Board are not restricted.

The argument is very basic. It is so basic that it is very well understood by prairie farmers. For a prairie farmer to struggle through the Wheat Board many years ago, it was a very important and long struggle. It was a struggle in which both my grandfathers were involved. Of course, they are no longer with us; that was many years ago. They were struggling for some bargaining and collective powers in the marketplace.

I will not deviate from the narrow strictures of the motions before us today to give a history of the Wheat Board, because Mr. Speaker would call me to order. In any event I believe that has already been done by the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) and by other Members of the House.

**Mr. Malone:** I would call you to order, too.

**Mr. Nystrom:** Perhaps it was even done by the Hon. Member for Crowfoot (Mr. Malone). The Wheat Board is vitally important, and perhaps a couple of analogies are relevant here in trying to persuade some of the urban Members of all Parties from central Canada, or indeed those from some of the western cities, that the Wheat Board for farmers is like a trade union for workers. It is something that will protect farmers. In fact, the Wheat Board for farmers is probably more important than a trade union for workers because unfortunately trade unions probably do not have as much power and influence over the income of workers as the Wheat Board has over the income of farmers. The Wheat Board has the power to sell grain and to obtain a really good price for it. The Wheat Board is financed by farmers and therefore is a very important institution.

**Mr. Benjamin:** It is just like the unions.