

Western Grain Transportation Act

without flaw. We are proposing under Clause 29 that paragraph 3 read as follows:

A railway company shall, in a subsequent calendar year, invest in railway equipment and plant for the movement of grain an amount not less than the after tax cost of capital, after tax depreciation, and after tax constant cost portion of payments it received under section 55 for the preceeding crop year.

We are simply saying that the railroad is bound to put into railroad equipment and maintenance of the system the amount of money that comes to it that year by the subsidies that are paid to it for the carrying of the product. That makes perfectly good sense. The subsidy is given to keep the system operating and functioning. It is directed toward the railroad company to see that the machinery, locomotives, cars railways and necessary maintenance to keep the operation mobile and moving is there and in place. We are asking that each year the railroad use the subsidies that have been given to it during that calendar year to put it specifically into upkeep, maintenance and carrying out of the cost of the running of the railroad. Those who have travelled know that because Canadian Pacific Railway is such a huge company with such vast holdings in many different areas that is not always taking place.

We hope that this motion will carry when we come to vote on it so that each year the moneys that have been procured by the public subsidy will be put into the care, upkeep and maintenance of the railroad and not into some other sector of the company's business. For that reason, we have, in union with our colleagues from the Progressive Conservative Party, asked in Motions Nos. 52 and 53 exactly the same basic thing, that this information become public information, that it not be something that could be restricted by railroad companies and kept from the public. Motion 52 as proposed by the Hon. Member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer) reads:

That Bill C-155 be amended in Clause 29 by striking out lines 10 to 15 at page 15.

That simply says and I quote:

To remove the provisions of the legislation that would require the members of the Senior Grain Transportation Committee to treat as confidential any information declared to be so by the railroads.

In exactly the same words, the Hon. Member for Regina West has proposed the same amendment, and I quote:

That Bill C-155 be amended in Clause 29 by striking out lines 10 to 15 at page 15.

It was a surprise to hear the Hon. Member for Crowfoot (Mr. Malone) speak against the Motion. I could not understand why he did that. He was actually speaking against the motion put forward by one of his colleagues. The Motion was exactly the same as that of my colleague from Regina West.

It is important to have this Clause amended in that way so that this cloak of secrecy that the railroad company wants to impose upon the Senior Grain Transportation Committee about its operation, where the funds and subsidies have gone, will not exist, that it will be public information for all Canadians, including the farmers, taxpayers, those in the Maritimes and in the rest of the country. They put their money into the system and they should know exactly where it has gone. No

railroad company should be given the power to keep that secret from the public.

I trust that the Government will hear very loud and clear that the Opposition Parties, both the Progressive Conservative and the New Democratic Party, have put forward the same two Motions, numbers 52 and 53. I hope that the Government hears what is being said by those on this side of the House, and that when the vote is called on the motions they will pass. That is what the people of Canada have a right to have. They should know what has happened to the subsidies.

I see that you are signalling me, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to have had this opportunity to speak, for which I thank you very much.

• (2150)

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I want to add something new to the debate.

An Hon. Member: That will be a change.

Mr. Deans: I listened with interest to my good friend and colleague, the Bard of the Conservative Party who muttered *sotto voce* "that will be a change." I want to suggest to him that perhaps if he would listen he would understand that the arguments we are putting, though similar, are intended to complement each other in an effort to change the Government's mind.

I want to say that the amendment we are proposing is fundamental to the contract which was entered into between the Government of Canada and the builders of the railroad. It was never intended that the railroads would have access to public funds without explaining fully how those funds were to be used. I would go further and say that it was never intended that the railroads would have access to public funds at all other than through grants for the purpose of building the railroad.

I know you were probably around at the time the railroad was built or maybe just shortly thereafter, Mr. Speaker. You will remember, if not from personal recollection, certainly from your study of history, exactly what took place back in the late 1800s. I can recall reading the history of elections at that particular time. There was a booklet put out by the Conservative Party for the purposes of the election of 1882. At that point in time the Conservative Party, under perhaps the greatest Conservative leader ever, was trying to explain to the electors of Canada the facts. He called it "A record of the Conservative Administration, Claims of the Government for the Support of the People". I intend to quote just two or three paragraphs from this.

I make reference to this because it bears very heavily on the debate we are having here today. The Conservative Party of the day back in 1882 put forward policies as follows:

A national policy for the encouragement of Canadian Industries, Agricultural, Manufacturing, Mining.

A Pacific Railway from ocean to ocean, on Canadian soil, for the development of our Great West and the building up of Canadian commerce.