

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 11, 1983

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION ACT

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH

The House resumed from Friday, October 7, 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 Motion No. 33 (Mr. Mazankowski).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): When the House adjourned on Friday, the Chair was listening to Hon. Members on the procedural admissibility of motions in amendment to Bill C-155. So far, almost five and a half hours have been devoted to these points of order and the Chair feels that the major procedural issues have been addressed and will want to begin consideration of the points that Members have made in order that a final ruling may be rendered as soon as possible.

However, as a courtesy to the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), who had the floor when the House adjourned last Friday, the Chair will hear his argument and invites him to complete his statement. After the Hon. Member has been heard, the Chair feels that the House should resume consideration of Motion No. 33.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I recognize that it is the Chair's prerogative to make such decisions. However, during my presentation I indicated that the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) would raise a particular argument on one matter that I felt was beyond my competence in terms of its technicalities. I wonder if you would consider allowing a brief intervention by the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre.

● (1110)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Is the Chair to take it, then, that the Hon. Member for Regina West does not wish to contribute further to his point of order?

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, I have an intervention on one more motion and my colleague, the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre, has an intervention on

another motion, as the House Leader has said. If we can proceed with those two interventions, then I think we will have pretty well completed our interventions on the matter of the admissibility of motions.

I would particularly like to refer to Motion No. 51; I did not speak to that motion on Friday. I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that that motion does not exceed the Royal Recommendation because the funds for branch line rehabilitation are provided for both in this Bill and in other measures. Therefore, the Royal Recommendation for the expenditure of funds is not exceeded in Motion No. 51.

Second, the Government has announced on numerous occasions its commitment to provide for the rehabilitation of branch lines, particularly those that have been put in the basic network, until the year 2000. All this motion does, Sir, is place in the Statute a provision for the carrying out of that commitment.

Rehabilitation is now taking place and has been for the last two or three years. It was the Government's intention, I believe, to have that branch line rehabilitation completed by the year 1986. My motion provides for it to be completed by July 31, 1987. This is another one of the fears of the people of western Canada. They want to see that that commitment by the Government cannot be undermined or revoked by either this Government or any succeeding government.

We were very careful with the wording of Motion No. 51. It does not go beyond the scope of the Bill because provision for the rehabilitation of those lines is in accordance with the long title of the Bill, which is to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain. It is certainly within the scope of the Bill. It does not provide for any additional funding by the federal Government. Those funds were already committed both in this Bill and, as in previous years, through other means. Therefore on both counts, Mr. Speaker, I submit that Motion No. 51 is in order. I would urge upon the Chair that the final ruling of the Chair would be that it is in order and that it can be debated and voted upon.

The passing of Motion No. 51 is very crucial to the three prairie Provinces. As I said, we were most careful with the wording of it so that we would not go beyond either the scope of the Bill or the scope of the Royal Recommendation. I would urge the Chair and the officials to take a second look at that motion and I would hope that Madam Speaker would agree in her final ruling that it is in order.

Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order and I will be very brief. The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) outlined the acceptability of the motion and the necessity for it. I