

Western Grain Transportation Act

necessarily be for the good of the producer. Certainly we have seen that in the legislation before us.

The motion put forward by the NDP goes to the other extreme. Their definition of reasonable is that we should be able to debate regulations *ad infinitum*. I do not know that that is necessary either. While all of us have our own definition of what is reasonable, it is not reasonable to have a one-hour debate on regulations that determine the future of an entire industry in Canada. I do not believe it is reasonable by anyone's definition when the Government can in one motion, by Order in Council, dramatically alter the rules by which the producers operate.

● (1220)

I think it would not take much effort to register how the tables would be turned. I would wonder how Government Members from the Maritimes would react if we brought forward a Bill dealing with the Maritimes fishing industry, that would alter the terms of reference for the entire industry and there was a provision in that Bill whereby you could debate all the regulations pertaining to that industry in one hour. I would imagine there are a fair number of Members, including the Minister of Public Works (Mr. LeBlanc), who is here, who would have some concern that the Members from New Brunswick would be able to ventilate their views in one hour. I think the Minister of Public Works would like to see them given the opportunity to debate for more than one hour, unless he really wants to throttle his own colleagues from New Brunswick, though I do not think he is that kind of a fellow.

Mr. LeBlanc: We have heard a lot of ventilation in the last few weeks.

Mr. Friesen: When I ventilate, it is fresh air. What about Members from Nova Scotia or the two Members from Prince Edward Island? If we had a Bill dealing with the fishing industry that determines the future of the maritime Provinces, I think Members of the Liberal Government would be very exercised about the need to be able to discuss regulations that would affect the fishermen constituents whose future they are determining.

There you see the definition or reasonableness changes, Mr. Speaker. What now seems eminently reasonable, a one-hour debate affecting the future of western farmers, which is what seems to be reasonable to the Government, would change dramatically if the venue were changed, if it were to determine the fishing industry of the Maritimes.

We need to look very carefully at the proposal put forward by the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski). By imposing a three-day limit to debate those regulations, he is being reasonable. Nobody is saying we have to debate the motion for three days. If we examine the regulations put forward by the Government and they seem to be meeting the needs of the producers, helping the producers operate comfortably within their arena and if those producers can function properly and the regulations are meeting those needs, why debate the issue for three days?

I suppose we can say that one of the most overworked committees in this House, one which does not get much attention but nevertheless is overworked, is the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and other Statutory Instruments. That particular committee has the burden of examining all of the regulations the bureaucrats design. Every once in a while we get notice that the bureaucracy has designed regulations that really are *ultra vires* or have gone too far and are really not operating within the constraints that ought to be theirs. In that case the Standing Committee on Regulations and Statutory Instruments has a very important function to fulfil. If we have only a one-day debate on a motion on regulations flowing from this Bill, rest assured that that committee will get an awful lot of extra work.

As the Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields) pointed out and we are talking about a one-hour debate on this motion the Government wants us to deal with it, by having ten-minute speeches. This means six speakers. Of those six speakers the Government will make very certain it will have three of them. The Opposition, at the maximum, will get 30 minutes of debating time to deal with very complex regulations. That is not within the bounds of reasonableness, Mr. Speaker, unless everyone unanimously wants to support the regulations. If our experience shows us anything or teaches us anything regarding this legislation, it is that we ought not to take for granted the reasonableness of the regulations that flow from this Bill.

I suppose at the bottom of all this is the whole concept of honour. Because of the experience we have had on this side of the House for the past three years, there is very little confidence left in the Government's sense of honour. Think back to the omnibus Bill presented to us a year and a half ago which brought on the ringing of the bells, Mr. Speaker. The Government tried to invoke about three principles in one Bill and made it impossible for us to debate it. In fact, in the Bill before us there are several concepts that we have allowed to pass within the Bill that are really in violation of the concept of good regulation.

The fact that the B.C. coal lands are incorporated in a Bill dealing with western grain transportation seems to me a contradiction of the whole concept of debate.

Mr. Mazankowski: How much are they worth?

Mr. Friesen: The coal lands are worth billions of dollars.

Mr. Mazankowski: Is it \$450 billion?

Mr. Friesen: Let us try \$450 billion within the life of those coal lands. We, representing British Columbia, might get ten minutes' debate on regulations determining the future of those coal lands under the Government's terms, assuming we get one of those three speaking slots.

Mr. Forrestall: Are those dollars 1963 dollars?

Mr. Friesen: That \$450 billion is in 1972 dollars.

We are talking about an escalating figure as those coal lands are developed. By the time that land is developed it will