

Mr. S. Victor Railton (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to set down on the record of the House events leading up to the release of the Atlantic region intermodal passenger study and details of the relationship of this particular study to the hearings just completed in the maritimes by the railway transport committee of the CTC. At the outset, let me emphasize that the study was not an attempt to carry out those review functions which are properly delegated to the CTC, but rather the objective was to do a study encompassing all public modes of passenger transportation.

The focus of the work was on public modes of interurban passenger transportation—for example, the rail, air and bus modes—and had the following objectives: to consolidate the existing information on interurban passenger transportation in the Atlantic region to provide a data base; and to examine a range of broad approaches for improving the level of service of interurban passenger transport in order to identify the relative financial and energy implications associated with these approaches.

In summary, the Atlantic region intermodal passenger study is a consultant's report which provides a framework for considering alternate concepts for transportation services and facilities. It does not address all the options across the spectrum in any one mode and represents, therefore, just one set of alternatives for the upgrading of passenger transportation in the region.

In conclusion, let me assure the hon. member that the federal government is awaiting the outcome of the CTC's route and service hearings in the Atlantic provinces. Following their recommendation then and only then will the government be able to make a complete and informed decision on the best rail passenger service for eastern Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been withdrawn.

Motion withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock tonight.

At 6.30 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Metric System GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

STATUTE LAW (METRIC CONVERSION) AMENDMENT ACT, 1976

AMENDMENTS TO WHEAT BOARD ACT TO FACILITATE CONVERSION TO METRIC SYSTEM

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Marchand (for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce) that Bill C-23, to facilitate conversion to the metric system of measurement, be read the third time and do pass.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. At six o'clock the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) had the floor.

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, prior to the dinner hour I said that I wished to speak again on this bill. I commenced my remarks by saying that I was extremely disappointed by the fact that the minister and his colleagues failed to respond to the proposal we had advanced in the form of an amendment. I felt that the minister's statement in the House on May 3, as recorded at pages 5226 and 5227 of *Hansard*, was sincere and genuine. He indicated that there would be further consultations with the grain industry and especially with the farmers. He said that the exact mechanism had not yet been decided upon but that he would be happy to hear and indeed would welcome suggestions from me or from any other member on this side of the House with regard to the most effective mechanism. I think that we on this side responded in a responsible, sensible and honourable fashion by making a very practical proposal. Unfortunately, it was rejected.

Neither the minister nor his colleagues have spoken on the amendment either directly or indirectly. There have not even been informal conversations or consultations. There has not been one speech from the government side of the House to indicate whether there was any glimmer of support for what we were attempting to achieve. The government has been both coy and contemptuous on this issue. They sat there and intimidated us by suggesting that we bring on the vote. I am indeed saddened by the fact that we can only conclude, judging from this scenario, that the minister was not sincere when he replied to me in the House on May 3. It is a sad day in the House when the words of a minister spoken in the House either during the question period or in a speech cannot be taken seriously by other members of the House or indeed by the public of Canada. What is more, we have not been given the slightest hint as to what kind of consultative process the government is considering. I do not know whether in fact some sort of mechanism has been formalized. I am not sure whether there will be any consultation, hence we feel that the minister has betrayed us and has not lived up to his promise. I suppose he may organize officials of the Metric Commission to meet with groups of farmers, but that will not be consultation. That will be nothing more than bureaucratic coercion. The experts will attempt to browbeat farmers into believing that the metric