

Western Grain Transportation Act

of this country. However, it affects indirectly, and in some ways just as dramatically, the entire country.

If we are going to have a Canada, no piece of legislation that is going to cut right to the heart of what makes this country go can be pushed and bullied through this Parliament just because one Party has a majority.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fraser: It is absolutely incredible that this Government can come here, whine, twist, wring its hands and say that the people of British Columbia will be put to the blocks in terms of transportation if this Bill does not go through immediately. That is not true, and the Minister knows it.

On February 1 the Minister issued a press release. He was talking about his then proposal which has now been changed. He said:

In the interim, to ensure that this transportation initiative brings jobs and investment as soon as possible, the federal Government will make payments of \$313 million to the railways so that additional railway construction and investment can be undertaken this Spring.

The suggestion that is being made and will be made when the Government propaganda machine gets going is that if this Bill does not go through in its present form right away, the Government is justified in bringing in closure because the West will not have a better transportation system. In view of all the talk about western Canadian development and other things, that is just a lot of hogwash. It is a cruel deception that will be put upon people who will be asked a simplistic question: "Do you want better railways? Then let this Bill go through and back us in closure."

That, with great respect, is slippery tactics. It is dishonest tactics. What is more, it cuts right to the heart of what Members on the Government side of the House have always, at least plausibly, put out, that we have to concern ourselves with every part of this country.

I cannot state the outrage that it gives me to know the tactics that are being used. I am from British Columbia. I have been intimately associated with the forest industry for many years. As Minister, I was responsible for forestry matters in this House. As Hon. Members know, nobody fought harder to do something about the needs of western forestry. In fact, during the short period that I was Minister, we managed to turn a program around.

Every British Columbian knows that we need better rail traffic, better rail facilities, more cars and more capacity. What is necessary in this House is to have sufficient time to debate the deficiencies of this Bill so that some sympathy can be gained in places like British Columbia in order that they may realize that this Bill will not do anything for western agriculture. It will not do much for British Columbia. It does absolutely nothing for the grain producers of British Columbia, or for the livestock or agricultural producers of British Columbia.

In what other ways does it affect British Columbia? Will the 50,000 acres of the so-called Dominion coal lands in the Province of British Columbia go back to the Province of

British Columbia as a result of this Bill? No. They go back to the federal Government and British Columbians should know that. British Columbians are also aware that we need better rail facilities for the transportation of our coal and minerals. British Columbians need time to realize that there is no reason in the world why upgrading of the railways cannot go ahead now, despite the fact that it may take a little longer to get this Bill through the House than the Minister would like.

I deeply resent being told that if I do not pass this Bill, with all its warts and defects, the fact that three Provinces are opposed to it and hundreds of thousands of people's lives and future are dependent upon this Bill, there will not be proper rail transportation in my Province. That is a cheap argument, and I know it. I do not intend to be silent about it. This Government has no right to come into this House and deal with matters in this way.

● (1200)

In terms of the importance of this Bill to the country, the Hon. Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) stated on Friday, May 13, 1983, about his own Bill:

In fact, this is the third major piece of legislation that has come before this Parliament, after the patriation of the Canadian Constitution and our national energy policy which was announced over the last few years and months.

Has anyone in the country forgotten that there was a protracted and extended debate on the Constitution issue and that it was brought about with some decency and accord? Has anyone in the country forgotten that the national energy policy, which has now proved to be a disaster, was debated for weeks and weeks in the House despite efforts by the Government to close debate off? By the Government's own admission, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is the third most important piece of legislation brought in since its election in 1980, yet it wants to put it through in a couple of days.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, that is just not good enough. This legislation goes right to the heart of what our country is all about.

There is no need for the Government to say that this must be done in so many hours or so many days. There are major defects in the Bill which can be corrected if the Government will use a little commonsense, back up and give Parliamentarians a chance to look at it. I say that to my hon. friends on the Government side because I am sure they can come up with better suggestions than those contained in these provisions.

The Government has done what it always does in these matters. For days, weeks and months it failed to get consensus, but because some of its so-called experts who were referred to by my hon. friend a moment ago decided that this is what is best for the country, that this is what we must do and we have the numbers to do it, the Government comes to the House of Commons saying that there now is a deal. No matter how many pieces of the garment are falling rent, the Government says: "We now have a deal and it is now up to you Members of