

Western Grain Transportation Act

take a serious look at the question in the House of Commons, unfettered by the entire question of the Crowsnest Pass freight rates. These matters are unrelated. To draw them together into one Bill does a disservice to the serious questions of compensation and ownership of the coal lands.

Finally, we have made a commitment. This commitment will stand. Notwithstanding what the Government attempts, there will be no change to the Crow rate in this session of Parliament by this Government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: I say that in the full recognition that the Government will attempt to bully us, to ridicule us and in every conceivable way to make it appear that we are obstructing useful and valuable things. We will suffer that in order to stop the Government from doing what will have immeasurable, long-term, harmful effects not only on western grain producers but on the majority of Canadians, regardless of where they live, who at this point in time do not fully understand the implications of Bill C-155.

This Bill will not pass. If the Government wants to see parts of it pass, it must withdraw it and bring it back in three separate parts. If the Government hopes to see other legislation pass, it had better reach an agreement not to proceed with any change to the Crow rate. If it wants to get ahead with other things that it believes are important, it had best sit down and discuss what alternative it can bring forward with which we are prepared to deal. But we will not allow this Bill to become law.

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Mr. Speaker, in joining in this debate and especially coming from eastern Canada, I feel I might be able to introduce a perspective which has been overlooked. As has been stated many times already, the Crowsnest Pass Agreement was negotiated by CP and the Government on behalf of Canadians. The intention was to induce settlement of the West in reliance on the Government's promise of a fixed freight rate. The Government of Canada and CP have made many agreements. Either in committee or in the House we will at least be able to refer to some of them.

Some people may not know about the very complicated dealings of CP with respect to its trackage. How many people, even those in the House, realize that the hundreds and thousands of miles of rail trackage, which are commonly referred to as the CP line, are owned by 14 subsidiary companies—and in one case it is not even a subsidiary company—having minority shareholders? For the benefit of those who have travelled by rail from Montreal to Toronto and even further west, whose rail lines are they riding, if they are lucky enough to obtain seats in a passenger car? They are not riding on CP trackage. It is trackage owned by the Ontario and Quebec Railway Company under a perpetual lease for 999 years. I want to familiarize the House—and hopefully in committee subsequently if the Bill ever gets that far—with how unfairly

treated are the minority shareholders and debenture holders of such subsidiary companies.

I have letters from people whose ancestors invested in good faith in companies such as the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company and the Ontario and Quebec Railway Company, only to discover today that they can obtain no meaningful information from CP concerning their ancestors' investment. In many cases the assets with which their security was secured have disappeared or simply been transferred to other CP companies or even to third parties. In short, when CP says that it is inequitable to hold it to the Crow rate, it is not telling us about the inequity it inflicts upon shareholders and bondholders in various subsidiary companies where rates were set as much as 100 years ago and which CP says it will never renegotiate under any circumstances.

For example, Mr. Speaker, how would you like to be the holder of part of a \$3.7 million New Brunswick Railway Company bond with a 4 per cent coupon whose lease is due in 2880? That is a first mortgage bond CP is taking advantage of today. How would you like to have part of the \$924,000 lent to the Toronto, Grey and Bruce Railway Company at 4 per cent, due on June 14, 2883, or part of the \$1.8 million which was lent to Quebec Central Railway Company, due August 1, 2911? How would you like to have part of the \$8.1 million lent to the Ontario and Quebec Railway Company at 5 per cent on a perpetual lease? Even the Government of Canada took its perpetual bond issue and made a termination date of 1996.

Mr. Speaker, do you remember the old 3 per cent bonds? When I have an opportunity to continue, I will indicate that if it is just to adjust the Crow rate, it must also be just to adjust all those things of a perpetual or long-term nature of which CP is taking advantage, to the detriment and disadvantage of shareholders and bondholders.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

MINES AND MINING
FUNDING NEEDED FOR MILLING OPERATIONS

Mr. Ray Chénier (Timmins-Chapleau): Madam Speaker, in its April 19 budget the Government of Canada made the one-third depletion allowance for mine exploration more attractive to the junior mining companies. This initiative will help finance these firms and will encourage Canadian investment.