

accurate. She mentioned how much support there was for this Bill and how many people want it passed. She said that we should get on with it and create all of these great and wonderful things the Government is promising through this Bill. However I do not see that the Bill is very promising. The Hon. Member who just spoke should certainly be aware of the facts because she did avail herself of the opportunity to travel across Canada with the Standing Committee on Transport. I was there and I did not hear anybody demand that this Bill be passed in its present form.

When individuals appeared before that committee who represented interests other than interests of grain producers or the cattle industry in western Canada and who wanted to see a change in the statutory rate and wanted added railway investment they were asked: "Do you want it done on the backs of the grain producers and the cattle feeders and the processing industry in the prairie basin? Do you want it so bad that it should be rammed through the House of Commons? Without exception, Mr. Speaker, they answered: "No, not on that basis. We want the added investment but we do not want to harm the grain producers or the cattle feeders or the processors in the prairie basin." That is what every group that appeared before us said, even those groups that mildly or even enthusiastically supported added investment in the railway system in western Canada. Those groups want to see a change but they do not want to see it done on the backs of the grain producers of western Canada.

I am sure that the Hon. Member who just spoke realizes that fact, and was for some reason supporting her Party; a party which at this time needs support. I suppose that is why she made the personal decision to support this Bill.

When I look at Motion No. 50 standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), it almost appears to me to be a form of nationalization. It is a very cumbersome way of forcing upon two corporations—one a Crown owned corporation and another a privately owned corporation—investment decisions that may or may not be in the best interests of those corporations. However, what is striking, Mr. Speaker, outside of the nationalization aspect of the motion, is that this Party put forward an amendment to Clause 29 during committee stage which would make it fairly straightforward that the railways are at liberty to make all of the necessary investments for grain movement. We said that the Canadian Transport Commission would be in the position to monitor and verify those investments. The commission would be verifying annually and reporting to the Minister on the investments made in the prior crop year. It would analyse the investment plans for the present and subsequent crop years, and within 90 days submit a report to the Minister on the appropriateness of those plans to ensure an adequate, reliable and effective railway service.

Thus the railways would be at liberty to use those funds and make those investments relating to grain movement, but they would have to contend with the Canadian Transport Commission rather than with people who have studied railway

performance and shortfalls or with an American based consulting firm.

Under the amendment to Clause 29, Mr. Speaker, the railways would make investments which would have to be verified by the Canadian Transport Commission which is composed of very capable commissioners located in the City of Saskatoon in western Canada, people who are very familiar with branch lines and with grain handling lines located in the western part of the country.

We might wonder, Mr. Speaker, why we have problems with this Bill and what the concerns are of the people in western Canada. My friend, the Hon. Member for Vegreville, quoted from a summary of western perspectives of the Crow by the Canada West Foundation. Just for the interest of those in the House, the goals and principal objectives of the Canada West Foundation are as follows:

1. To initiate and conduct research programs regarding the economic and social characteristics and potentialities of western Canada.
2. To initiate and conduct informational and educational programs to encourage an appreciation of the Canadian heritage and to stimulate an awareness of the future throughout western Canada.

The foundation agrees that Motion No. 50 deals with one of the biggest problems in the Bill. The Canada West Foundation explains why that is a concern to the people in western Canada who are involved in the basic movement of goods. That is explained on page 6 of the report under the heading "Railway Performance Guarantees" and reads as follows:

THE ISSUE: A lack of trust by westerners of both the Federal Government and the railways has been one of the most significant stumbling blocks to an amicable settlement of the freight rates debate. This issue amounts to an attempt to balance the need to free railways from their serious economic squeeze in order to ensure the necessary large scale investments are undertaken and the need to offer some protection to Prairie farmers who represent in many respects a captive market.

That, Mr. Speaker, essentially expresses in one paragraph the concerns that were expressed during the three months of travel of the Standing Committee on Transport in western Canada. That captive market is at the mercy of the railways that, under this Bill, operate under a cost-plus system in perpetuity. We do not feel that the Government has provided adequate methods for making sure that those railways will not continue to add cost and add cost and come back to the public treasury of Canada to have those costs again increased.

Returning to the report of the Canada West Foundation, under the subheading "Provisions of Bill C-155", it reads:

Bill C-155 requires railways to submit investment information to the Canadian Transport Commission for review. The legislation also lays the groundwork for a system of sanctions and awards to railways to ensure that improvements are made to the system. If the railway investments are deemed inadequate, the Minister of Transport is empowered to withhold a portion of the subsidy equal to what the railways ought to have spent.

We are debating Motion No. 50 together with the next motion, Motion No. 58, which stands in the name of an Hon. Member of the Conservative Party, and deals with the accommodation for traffic which would satisfy what the Canada West Foundation calls the "Western Response" to the problem by forcing the railways to spend money properly. The report reads as follows: