

Western Grain Transportation Act

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I value this opportunity to contribute to the debate on the motions which are before the House at this time. As a Member, I have often noticed that when debates take place and there is enough time allowed for Hon. Members to express their views, the Ministers responsible for the piece of legislation or regulations that are to be put into place will be present taking notes. Because of that, we do find some changes taking place.

The present Government wants to allow only one hour to debate regulations that could have a profound effect on an industry that is vital to all of Canada but particularly to western Canada. I am talking about the farming industry. Government Members who introduce regulations by Order in Council that could and would have a very profound effect upon western Canada often do not understand how the regulations proposed will affect the western agricultural industry. This is to be understood when we have a Government with no representatives from west of Winnipeg and when we have a Government that depends upon political hacks in western Canada to tell the Government what it should be doing or how a regulation will affect western Canada. I am referring to some of these aged members of the other place who are running around representing British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. These men have not only grown old and in some cases quite senile but have absolutely no concept of what is happening in their own back yard. They are tired, old and have indeed been rewarded with a permanent pension by being appointed to the other place.

The motion put by an Hon. Member of the New Democratic Party calls for unlimited debate. I think that that is unreasonable. If in three days we cannot use our intelligence to indicate the opposition to a regulation that is being proposed by the Government through Order in Council, we should not be here. Of course, the New Democratic Party constantly reaches for the maximum. Its Members do not think about the legislation that must be put through the House.

The Hon. Member for Selkirk-Interlake (Mr. Sargeant) said that three days of debate on one regulation or on a number of regulations would not be sufficient and that we were probably trying to limit debate to three days because we will soon be the Government and would want this automatic closure in place so that we would not have to worry. I am particularly pleased that he recognizes that the Conservative Party is going to form the next Government. We will form the next Government but not with the help of Members of the New Democratic Party because they are the ones who put in that gang across the street. They should always remember that.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Sargeant: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member has clearly misquoted me. I said that some day the Conservatives may form a Government. I did not recognize that they were going to.

Mr. Shields: Mr. Speaker, again we have heard a very frivolous comment from a Member of the New Democratic

Party. The comment made by the Hon. Member for Selkirk-Interlake was that we may form the next Government and we would want closure in place. That is totally irrelevant because the Bill that is presently before the House of which we are only dealing with one clause is a Bill that will have a profound effect and is composed of many pages and many amendments. That is why we are against the closure that exists today, closure that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) brought in. However, to suggest that we cannot discuss regulations that will affect western Canada in three days is ridiculous.

All that the Government is doing by limiting debate on regulations to one hour is perpetuating a system that has taken over the Government. I am talking about the system of having the bureaucracy draft regulations that become laws which can often severely penalize those who will be affected by those regulations to the point of fines, court appearances and incarceration.

There is something wrong when we in Canada allow the responsibility of governing and law making to fall out of the hands of the House of Commons and into the hands of the bureaucracy. That is what has happened time and time again. There is indeed something wrong. That is not why the people from our constituencies have elected us and sent us to Ottawa. We are here to be the law makers. We are here to account for those laws that are put into effect in the House of Commons. On the other hand, members of the bureaucracy are hired to carry out the policies and the laws that are passed in the House. More and more we see the bureaucracy setting down guidelines, rules and regulations that have profound effect. By limiting the debate to one hour with ten-minute speeches, the government ensures and absolutely underlines the fact that the bureaucracy will do the governing in the country.

One hour of debate on regulations after a motion has been initiated by a number of parliamentarians or Senators means 60 minutes of ten-minute speeches. The Government will use up three of those speeches and will then allow us only three ten-minute speeches to point out to the Government in a public forum the effect those regulations will have on the agricultural community.

We in the House all know that sometimes debate goes on for two or three days and it is not until the second or third day that members of the Press Gallery even realize or understand what we are talking about. It is only through this House that we signal to the press and through them to the Canadian people the detrimental effects that certain regulations will have. That is why I support my friend and colleague, the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), on his motion to allow three days of debate. Three days would be ample time and is at least a compromise position. One hour is totally inadequate. Again, I would not want to see unlimited debate on any one or two regulations that would be brought in.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to close by saying that I hope the Government will recognize that we on this side are being sincere in requesting that this amendment for a three-day debate be passed.