

Western Grain Transportation Act

highways there had been worn out by heavy trucks up to three times faster than the Government of Iowa could afford to repair or replace them. As a result, the State of Iowa developed a program to subsidize existing railroad branch lines by keeping the grain moving by rail. I refer Members particularly to the 1982 Iowa railroad analysis update, which I read some time ago and feel would be useful to introduce in this debate.

I am sorry that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) is not here, but I wish to read the following excerpt, for the benefit of Government Members, from the railroad analysis update:

The assault on Iowa's railroad system has resulted in a sense of urgency on the part of the Iowa Department of Transportation and the General Assembly to develop means for preserving those lines necessary to the state's economy.

An article by John Gallagher states:

The first thing the Iowa Department of Transport did was to conduct an economic analysis—

Which is what we are asking for among other things.

—of all the branch lines in the state which provided the basis for the 1978 Iowa Railroad Plan. This plan was updated in 1980 and 1982.

● (1750)

Basically, it compares the benefits which the state will receive from the preservation of service on the various segments of the railroad system with the cost of maintaining such service. The analysis of the state railroad system is computerized and can easily be drawn upon and updated.

When a railroad requests permission to abandon a branchline in Iowa, the benefits and costs derived from the 1978 study are updated and a revised benefit/costs ratio is computed. The state can then intercede in the hearings and protect the interests of shippers and the public.

I am sure Hon. Members have not realized—and I see one sleeping.

An Hon. Member: What is his riding?

Miss Jewett: It is the Hon. Member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen) who is sleeping.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deans: Now he is awake.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, is the Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Miss Jewett) referring to Highway 30 which runs from Cedar Rapids to Clinton, Iowa, or is she referring to Highway 64 which goes from Dubuque to Davenport, Iowa, and includes the community of Comanche?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss Jewett: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Hon. Member asked that question because what Iowa did was not to pick one or the other. It looked at the whole system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): I hope all the people in the gallery are enjoying this.

Miss Jewett: Let me continue. We are talking about the cost-benefit question. The article continues:

Benefits are calculated in three parts:

User benefits—the “total annual transportation and handling costs savings” to shippers if a line is upgraded and not abandoned.

Railroad benefits—the “net contribution a rail line makes to a railroad’s viability if the line is rehabilitated rather than abandoned.” If this is a profit it is added to the benefits; if it is a loss it is subtracted.

Public benefits—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but the Chair is having difficulty relating the documents to the amendments specifically before the House.

An Hon. Member: And so is she.

Mr. Anguish: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that you are very quick to call our Members to relevancy.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Anguish: It is very hard for a Member in this House to stand up and try to be relevant to the Bill when there is all this chatter over here. If you did your job in the Chair—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. With all due respect to the Hon. Member, the Chair has listened very carefully.

Mr. Anguish: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Would the Hon. Member please sit down? The Chair has been listening very carefully to the Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Miss Jewett) and invites the Hon. Member to continue and relate her remarks to the amendment before the House.

Miss Jewett: Mr. Speaker, I do believe they are quite relevant. I am talking about the cost-benefit analysis that ought to be done.

Mr. Flis: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very clear that the New Democratic Party has run out of speakers who know anything about Bill C-155.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member is not making a point of order.

Mr. Anguish: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam has the floor, and she has an opportunity to make her point.

Miss Jewett: Mr. Speaker, if I may, I was trying very hard to show why there should not be an abandonment until there is a cost-benefit analysis done. I was referring to the Iowa study because Iowa did abandon railways and then discovered, on the basis of the cost-benefit analysis, that it had made a mistake. I thought that was really quite relevant to the motion. Also, I just wanted to convince my friends that I did know what I was discussing.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!