

Western Grain Transportation Act

tion Committee. It consists of the Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board, the chief commissioner of the Canadian Grain Commission, the Administrator, Members representing grain producers from three provinces, including representatives of the Canadian Corporative Wheat Producers Organization and the United Grain Growers. Add to this representatives of the Canadian Wheat Pools, and all those engaged in the operation of grain elevators.

I think it is a bit too much to demand that documents or information submitted to this Committee, which is responsible for the management, administration and quality of users' services with respect to transportation of grain, not be subject to the same rules as the Canadian Transport Commission.

Mr. Speaker, it is 6:14 p.m., Monday, October 31, and I think that we are again debating a Bill that should have received the full support of Members on both sides of the House, if we consider the economic situation prevailing in Canada today and the commitment made by the Government of Canada and the railway companies with respect to the investments that must be made in the Provinces concerned, the thousands of jobs that must be created, that are being created by this Bill and by the funds that are being invested both by the Government and the railway companies, and when I consider the many hours that have been utterly wasted on motions and petitions presented by both opposition parties over a period of two days. And today, the Official Opposition has the audacity to ask us to sit beyond the normal time of adjournment of the House, which is 6 p.m. I just wonder how the Members of the Opposition, the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party, expect people to take them seriously on this very important issue. We have lost a tremendous amount of time on this matter, and now they want to make up for lost time because everybody on both sides of the House is hoping that at last the House will be able to adjourn for a week.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that this Bill is extremely important to the railway industry, to the Government of Canada and even more so to railway users. And when Members decide to waste the time of the House in order to defend indefensible options which in some ways run counter to the public interest, I hope you will allow me to censure this attitude on the part of the Opposition.

As for the motions before the House, Motions Nos. 50, 52 and 53, I think they add nothing at all to the Bill. On the contrary, Motions Nos. 52 and 53 weaken the Bill, and Motion No. 50 does not add anything as such and even diminishes the impact of the Bill through finicky measures that would require railway companies to provide details or information, as well as investments in proportion to taxes payable to the Government.

The Government of Canada has always invested enormous sums in railway transportation. The railways are part of our history, and Canada owes its present position on the international market, especially with respect to grain sales, to the

development of its railway network. Today, we must upgrade our railway facilities and ensure that Western grain producers get better service from the railway companies. This is a commitment that should be dear to the heart of all Canadians. By objecting to the passage of this Bill, the Official Opposition and the Members of the New Democratic Party are merely postponing measures that are necessary and indispensable for Western grain producers and for the Canadian economy.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we shall get through this Bill this week and that Canadians will finally be able to take advantage of the benefits, both direct and indirect, of this legislation.

As I see it, this Bill was the result of a presentation made by a large number of Canadians and parties concerned by these measures, including grain producers, elevator operators, railway companies and railway users engaged in the shipping of goods other than grain. We all know that our present railway system is not adequate to carry all the commodities and consumer goods that must be transported, and I think today, more than ever before, after the many hours wasted as a result of the inconsistency or lack of judgment of the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party Members, we should have the common sense to adopt a Bill that is absolutely essential to the Canadian economy.

[English]

Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the debate on Motions Nos. 50, 52 and 53, I would just at this time draw to the attention of the House that now, because of a motion put forward by the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), we are attempting to debate these motions and get to those matters which most people in Canada feel are at the crux of the problems with its legislation; that is, whether the producers have the ability to pay, what the social ramifications of the increased cost will be on the fabric of western Canada, how the method of payment should be distributed, and whether the contributions of Government to the railroads should be distributed directly to the railroads or distributed to the producers in some form. We would also hope to deal with the issue of the British Columbia coal lands.

• (1820)

If we are successful in dealing with those very important issues it will be because of the responsibility this Party has shown in trying to debate them in a reasonable way. These are the issues that the people in our ridings want to have resolved and want to make the Government aware of. By making the Government aware, we hope the Government will respond to the wishes of the people who will be affected by these changes that we on this side of the House are proposing to correct.

It is encouraging that there have been at least two speakers from the Government side today. Those two Hon. Members travelled sporadically with the Standing Committee on Transport in western Canada and other parts of Canada this Summer. I am sure that the translation of the speech of the Hon. Member from the Government side who just spoke was