

Business of the House

report stage of Bill C-155, an Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain, and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof.

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, I would hope we might be able to respond to this intervention by the Official Opposition and try to facilitate the time of the House. Obviously we are very serious about our willingness to receive relevant and pertinent amendments after the decision has been made by the House according to the rules on allocation of time. What we obviously have to do, particularly on the question of the safety net, is find the proper means by which we can negotiate that time. I am quite prepared to meet with Members of the Opposition to work out how that might be done during the two days of report stage so that the amendments they are proposing as well as those we have in mind might get their fair share of attention, which they were not allowed to have because of the filibustering during the previous 11 days of report stage.

If Members of the Opposition are as serious as they are asking us to be, we are prepared to consider their amendments, but in light of a decision, once it is taken, on the application at report stage. Therefore I suggest we proceed with the Orders of the Day and discussion of that motion.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Speaker, I appreciate what the Minister has said with respect to the consideration the Government will give to these very legitimate suggestions for amendments to be placed on the Order Paper. We are asking for unanimous consent to have these matters brought forward as proposed amendments to the legislation. The Government will then have the opportunity of responding to the proposals put forward by the Hon. Member for Vegreville, the Hon. Member for Assiniboia and the Hon. Member for Medicine Hat. That is precisely the reason we now put these matters forward, not that the Government will accept them without debate, but rather that they simply be put on the Order Paper for consideration. They are new and novel propositions.

The Minister knows that he is going to bring forward suggestions with respect to safety net and other matters he thinks should be included in the legislation. Clearly this is an opportunity for him to allow these legitimate suggestions—he will understand how important they are in western Canada and across this country—to be put forward for consideration by the House at report stage. There is nothing offensive with respect to this proposition. In fact, it is precisely what the Minister has asked for. We are now giving formal notice in these instances of some amendments we think should be given serious consideration by the Minister.

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: Madam Speaker, I call this a clear abuse of parliamentary procedure and a waste of the time of the House. The Hon. Member who just spoke said that the amendments in question were new amendments, and the House is aware that according to our procedure, amendments that cannot be considered at the report stage are not those for which notice has been given 24 hours before starting consideration of the report

stage. The Hon. Member said that he thought the Minister intended to try and obtain the unanimous consent of the House, at some point, regarding an amendment about the security net, but I would like to point out to the Hon. Member that notice was given of these amendments, they had appeared on the Order Paper and were judged to be inadmissible. There is a difference. In any event, Madam Speaker, I can inform the Chair that we intend to refuse unanimous consent for any amendment to Bill C-155 proposed at this time, and as I explained earlier—

[English]

If you do not want to listen to the translation I will say it in English.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): It is offensive in either language.

Mr. Pinard: I said earlier we are willing to negotiate in good faith outside this House, but certainly not to co-operate with the Opposition in filibustering our own Bill.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: That is your story. You think any debate on this is a filibuster.

Mr. Pinard: We are saying we should move the motion to limit debate today. We will have until Tuesday evening to negotiate. We will make proposals to the Opposition and we will be willing to listen to their proposals. But today it is out of order. We are wasting time and we are not willing to give unanimous consent to any amendment to Bill C-155 at this time. We are willing to negotiate in good faith before we come to a final vote on report stage of the Bill. That is very clear.

I submit as an additional point that they are not allowed to refer to the substance of a Bill under discussion in the House. That is what they are doing by seeking unanimous consent to deal with the substance of the Bill.

For all those reasons, Madam Speaker, we ask you to stop this obvious filibuster and waste of time. We want to proceed with our motion and I give notice to the Opposition that we are willing to negotiate in good faith all the time about Bill C-155 until it is voted on.

Mr. Mazankowski: Madam Speaker, I sense a bit of a conflict between the two Ministers. One suggests they are prepared to negotiate in good faith—

Mr. Axworthy: After the vote.

Mr. Mazankowski:—and the Minister of Transport says he is serious. I ask you, Madam Speaker, how can either one of those hon. gentlemen be serious in advancing any realistic negotiations under the threat of closure? If the Minister of Transport is genuine and serious about his attempt to reach some satisfactory solutions, and he says “I am”, then he should recommend to the Government House Leader withdrawal of the threat of closure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!