

Western Grain Transportation Act

The New Democratic Party attempted in committee, and again today their House leader attempted, to shift a number of definitions from the interpretation clauses No. 34 and No. 54 to the interpretation clause at the beginning of the Bill, which is Clause 2. In committee this was voted through. The majority felt that definitions such as "base rate-scale", "Crow benefit", "estimated eligible costs", are better off in Clause 34, in Part II, where the Bill deals with rates.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think the arguments at the moment are as to the procedural acceptability and not as to whether or not the amendments should be in one section of the Bill or another. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary is speaking about whether or not they should be in a different section of the Bill. The argument is really about their procedural acceptability and we remind him of that.

Mr. Flis: That is exactly what I am leading up to, Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member would just hang on to his seat for a while.

Madam Speaker had ruled out of order the insertion of definitions in Clause 2, Motions Nos. 2 to 7 inclusive, Motions Nos. 12, 15 and 17, but she did not rule out of order the consequential deletions of the respective definitions from Clauses 34 and 54 to which I referred earlier, Motions Nos. 60, 62, 65, 100, 103, 128, 132 and 137.

I would like to draw to the attention of the Hon. Member who just intervened that Motion No. 60 is consequential to Motions Nos. 2 and 3; Motion No. 62 is consequential to Motion No. 5; Motion No. 65 is consequential to Motion No. 7; Motion No. 100 is consequential to Motion No. 4; Motion No. 103 is consequential to Motion No. 6; Motion No. 128 is consequential to Motion No. 12; Motion No. 132 is consequential to Motion No. 15; and Motion No. 137 is consequential to Motion No. 17. In the Government's view, the consequential motions should also be ruled out of order.

If the consequential Motions are accepted but the main motions are not, we could have some difficulty later on at debate stage and at division stage. I would ask Madam Speaker to take my intervention into consideration when she is deciding whether or not these consequential amendments should be out of order.

Second, the House Leader for the New Democratic Party went on at great length before we broke for lunch, stating that the coal lands should not be included in the Bill. He was attempting again to split the Bill into three parts. I do not feel that debate has any place here, yet the Hon. Member did not call order when his House Leader was talking about the coal lands.

I would like to draw to Madam Speaker's attention that Clause 62 is included in this Bill because the coal lands were included in the Crow's Nest Pass Act.

Mr. Mazankowski: That has no bearing.

Mr. Flis: The title of the Bill is "An Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof". I think this clause pertains to that section of the title where it says "certain Acts in consequence thereof". What Clause 62 attempts to do is to remove the \$2 per tonne limit in extracting this coal which, by inference, would indicate and imply that the coal could not be exported. By lifting this \$2 per tonne limit the inference now would be that the coal can be exported. Is this not what the Bill is all about—to improve our transportation system so we can improve our exports?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak specifically to Motion No. 1. I deferred to our House Leader yesterday because he outlined in a much broader perspective our Party's position with respect to the Speaker's preliminary ruling. I think it is fair to say, if you have followed the debate, Sir, that the dilemma with which the Speaker and indeed the House is faced is that there seems to be some confusion or lack of clear definition as to the intent and purpose of this Bill. The whole procedural debate has seemed to centre around that point. I think that caused the committee some difficulty as well. I know the distinguished Chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport wrestled with that very issue.

It was interesting to note the Speaker's remarks yesterday. She pointed out that she had placed an interpretation on the intent of the Bill and she stated:

The purpose of the Bill, as I understand it, is to provide for new rates for the movement of grain through the Crowsnest Pass.

● (1420)

In the title of the Bill there is no mention of the Crow's Nest Pass Act or of the Crowsnest Pass freight rates. Bill C-155 simply indicates that it is:

An Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof.

It is very clear, according to the submission of my House Leader and that of the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, that as long as there is not a clear statement of intent and purpose attached to the Act, it will be very difficult to rule with any degree of accuracy I know the final decision will rest in your hands, Sir, but the fact remains, notwithstanding the ruling being made, one would have to say that under that broad title a lot of latitude should be provided for debating and considering motions which affect the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain. Unless there is entertained in the course of report stage a clear statement of purpose and intent, it will be compelling upon you to ensure that the widest possible latitude be allowed in the consideration of the presented motions.

In Motion No. 1, I attempted to define the statement of purpose and intent. It is consistent with the title of the Bill and with the contents of the Bill. Perhaps it is not all-encompassing but it more clearly defines what the Bill is actually setting out to do. It was patterned after a similar statement of purpose and intent contained in corresponding pieces of legislation