

The Hon. Member for Saskatoon West and other Tory speakers have said that Motion No. 37 is an attempt to rectify a faux pas from the committee stage. We know what the Government and the Tories accepted and rejected while they were working out certain deals together behind the scene. We see what is now being brought before Parliament. We recognize in Motions Nos. 36, 37 and 38 that there are steps that we have to take to protect the farmers and the interests of the Canadian economy, which benefits from about \$6 billion a year from the grain trade.

The third point on Motion No. 36 is that under Bill C-155 the railways will already be overpaid enormous sums for moving the grain. In our view and the view of most farmers, there is no justification to pay them even more for meeting performance objectives which are simply the bottom line. They are the minimum that the railways should be meeting.

The fourth point with regard to Motion No. 36 is that the Bill would place the Canadian Wheat Board in a position subordinate to the Minister. We do not believe that is appropriate. We have scrutinized, as I am sure most producers have, the ability to place the Administrator over and beyond the authority of the Canadian Wheat Board. That does not strike us as sensible. Whether the Tories think it is a notional or national idea, there is no logic to it. We believe the track record of the Wheat Board is quite good. The bottlenecks have primarily been created by the railroads.

Motion No. 37 adds to Clause 18(e) on awards and sanctions to the rail system the words "but awards and sanctions for system participants other than the railway companies shall be non-pecuniary in nature".

A Tory Member said that strikes are the real problem. He did not go so far as to say that perhaps there should be an anti-strike clause written in, but that seemed to be the theme of his speech. We say it does not make a great deal of sense to take financial sanctions against the Wheat Board, the pools or the farmers in almost every situation imaginable for occurrences that are beyond their control. Once a boxcar is at the elevator and the grain is loaded, it is out of their hands. Their responsibility is to till the land under all weather conditions, such as drought. There may be a lack of money to buy fertilizer or pay road hauling costs outside the branch line system. The farmer has to meet those responsibilities first. To propose in legislation that someone other than the railroad be taken to task is completely illogical.

Motion No. 38 would add to Clause 18(e) which was described by the Hon. Member for Saskatoon West as the most cockamamie set of regulations he has ever seen. We in this Party will be interested to see if the Tories vote as they did in committee, voting with the Liberals for this set of regulations, or voting with us to change the regulations in order to meet the interests of the farmers and the Canadian economy instead of the railroads.

I see you are rising to indicate my time is up, Mr. Speaker. Motion No. 38 adds the words "but such awards and sanctions shall not involve the allocation of railway cars nor affect the

Western Grain Transportation Act

quota system of the Canadian Wheat Board." That motion speaks for itself.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I would like to re-emphasize some of what my colleagues have said about the importance of these amendments, particularly as they pertain to requiring performance from the railways and providing for sanctions in the event that the railways do not live up to performance expectations as far as grain hauling is concerned or, for that matter, anything else.

It is a historical fact in this country that the railways have not lived up to the expectations which they have often created as a way of getting from the Canadian people and the Government various subsidies and other moneys, whether in the form of money for branch line rehabilitation, hopper cars built by governments because the railways would not keep up their rolling stock fleet, or for passenger rail services, calculated by the railways in such a way as to get as much subsidy as possible from Government invested in trying to improve passenger service in this country. The list goes on and on of ways in which the railways of this country have milked the Government and thereby the Canadian people. It is abominable that Governments have lacked the courage to make the railways perform according to the expectations they have created in order to get these subsidies.

These amendments propose finally getting tough with the railways, putting a structure in the Bill which would make that possible. We do not have confidence in the existing rules and regulations pertaining to performance by the railways. We do not have confidence in the existing agencies. We note with regularity the way in which the railways escape harsh treatment while other Canadians and institutions have to meet difficult requirements. That is one reason we have introduced this amendment, finally to correct what we perceive to be a consistent and undesirable part of the relationship between the railways and the Government. They have received a variety of subsidies over the years but have not been required to perform up to the expectations created at the time the subsidies were made. In the past they have failed to meet performance objectives on a consistent and recurring basis. This is why we believe a penalty clause is needed for the railways. I just came into the Chamber, but I understand the Tories are supporting us on this amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.