

Western Grain Transportation Act

marketing of that product through continued authority over elevators, production and grain transportation.

● (1130)

Motion No. 40, which our Party has moved, is certainly an amendment which should be acceptable to the Government. The Canadian Wheat Board has strongly lobbied to have this motion accepted. I urge the Government to consider very seriously accepting this amendment which will strengthen the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board so that it can better serve Canadian producers of grain.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I also wish to enter into the debate on both Motion No. 39, which was introduced by the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson), and Motion No. 40, which was introduced by my colleague and friend, the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin). As Hon. Members have mentioned previously, the intent of the amendments is to strengthen the position of the Canadian Wheat Board, or at least to protect its historic role, a role which has evolved over years of experience and practice and has benefited and worked for the farmers and producers in western Canada.

The Bill as it stands without these amendments, Mr. Speaker, weakens the position of the Canadian Wheat Board in terms of allocating cars and organizing the transportation of grain to the ports. It opens the door to the Administrator so that he will be able to take on more and more of the responsibilities which have been handled by the Canadian Wheat Board. We stand opposed to this. Indications would show that Members of the Conservative Party, especially those who come from Saskatchewan, Alberta or Manitoba, understand that the Canadian Wheat Board is an essential organization for western Canadian farmers. They understand that one should not muck around with it.

Bill C-155, and particularly this clause, is just another example of a Government with no representation from the agricultural west. We have a Department, Mr. Speaker, which has a tremendous record of major mistakes wading in and totally disrupting and destroying a system which has been developed in western Canada over the years. This Bill, and this clause as well, is presented to us by the Department which brought us Mirabel Airport and the proposed Pickering airport, billion dollar mistakes, billion dollar "Oops, sorry, folks, we just miscalculated!"

These are the people who have been in charge of transportation policies in Canada over the years, who have allowed the rail service in this country to deteriorate, who have overseen the gradual demise of passenger rail service in Canada. This has been done to a country like ours which is so dependent on the railways. That Department has allowed the gradual erosion of these essential services and now this same Department is wading in and mucking around with the Wheat Board. I do not trust it, Mr. Speaker. None of my constituents in Regina East, whether they be Conservative, New Democrat or Liberal, trust it. There is an intense feeling in western Canada, Mr.

Speaker, that that Department, and the Government, do not know what they are doing.

Our constituents depend upon us, their representatives in the House of Commons, to speak forcefully and often of their positions and their fears. These are dark days, Mr. Speaker, for this institution and for this Government, because the Government is determined to go ahead without any experience or representation, nor any sensitivity to the needs of western Canada. In its own blind, bureaucratic way it is determined to push ahead. It has cloaked itself with a sense of self-righteousness, claiming what it is doing is progressive and forward-looking. This is just bureaucratic talk. It has been convinced it is right by its own bureaucrats. It has stopped listening to the people and is blindly going ahead and destroying a system which has taken years to organize and which is working well right now. On top of that, it is now attempting to still the voices from the west. It is going to introduce closure. It is going to prevent us from talking on all these amendments.

All of the amendments which have been introduced by the Hon. Member for Regina West and many amendments introduced by the Conservative Party are valid amendments which must be taken into consideration, because the original Bill is so flawed—even technically flawed—that it needs this careful consideration of each clause. We have a right to speak. We have a right to present the points of view of our constituents in western Canada. But the Government now does not want to hear this. It just wants to close its eyes and ears and shove this Bill through. It is tragic that one of the important fabrics of our society, particularly in western Canada, is being torn apart and the representatives of western Canada are not even allowed to give their points of view, their objections, thoughts and comments on this Bill.

The events which have occurred in the last few weeks here in the House, and those which will occur in the immediate future, are sad events, not only for this institution but for Canada as a whole. What is occurring, Mr. Speaker, is that something which has tied us together as a nation is now being destroyed by a mindless bureaucracy with the consent of a heartless and insensitive Government.

Many Hon. Members have already talked about the important role of the Canadian Wheat Board, how it has evolved and how essential it is. The Canadian Wheat Board has a major say, if not the ultimate say, in the allocation of grain cars in order to facilitate the movement of our products in the most efficient way possible. What this Bill does in effect, as pointed out by other Hon. Members, is to allow that role to be whittled away, to deteriorate over time.

I urge Government Members to look at the merits of the motions which have been proposed both by the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party. I urge them to stand up and at least tell us where they stand on this issue. At least they should have the common decency to tell us why these amendments should not be included. But they sit there in silence, using their majority to ram this Bill through without even giving an intelligent reason for doing so. That is a further insult on insult on insult. I would urge Government Members