

### Transportation

documents still around. They cannot look at this material and say that it represents the government's position.

It is not true, for instance, that deals have already been struck with the three prairie wheat pools, yet that is one accusation that has been made. Of course, I have met the people concerned at different times but we have not struck any deals. I repeat, the government's position is as set out in the policy statement.

Another untruth that has been spread in the west is that grain growers will be asked to pay five or ten times the current freight charges for grain. Mr. Speaker, there was a political leader who once said that if you were going to tell a lie, you should tell a big one and then people would believe you. He started a world war. In order to enrage people you just have to be as false as you possibly can be!

I have been a politician for 36 years, Mr. Speaker, I do not have much going for me except honesty. The opposition continually tries to attack that by attacking me for wearing a green hat or things that have nothing to do with making decisions. You would think it was a crime to wear a green hat. The opposition tries to downgrade the government in any way it can, but that is being dishonest too.

Producers currently pay 15 cents per bushel. The total cost of transporting a bushel of grain to export points has been estimated at around 75 cents a bushel. That means that farmers are now paying only about 20 per cent of the real transportation costs. Many farmers have said to me, "Look, Mr. Minister—look, Gene, or look, Whelan—we are ready to pay more. You just make those trains move. We will grow more, we will ship more grain and sell more grain." The hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), who was the minister of transport in the Clark government, used to say, "Keep those trains moving". That is what it amounts to, Mr. Speaker.

If we were still growing grain in the way we grew it in 1879, Mr. Speaker, we would not be one of the world's leading exporters. No country in the world exports as high a percentage of the grain it produces. No country has to haul it as far to port. In some years we export over 70 per cent of the wheat we produce. The United States may export more in actual tonnes but it does not have to be hauled as far. In fact, I think they export about 50 per cent of the wheat produced.

We faced a lot of different challenges in this land that is 4,000 miles from sea to sea. Over our rough terrain and in our cold winters the trains lose one third of their pulling capacity through the mountains and across the prairies. This year we will move the largest amount of grain we have ever moved—26 million tonnes, or two million more than ever before. That will be with what some people say are inadequate facilities. I have received various letters and petitions from farmers. I have had occasion to meet with various people. With the exception of the National Farmers Union, they have all said, "Keep the Crow." They have refused to look at anything else. They have also said, "Whelan, why are you doing this?" I said, "I am keeping part of the Crow; I am keeping the part of the Crow which will fly." I am referring to the one which will make the grain move. The Minister of Transport said that he would keep

that part of the Crow as well. He will not charge them full transportation costs. We have made the commitment that our commercial grain producers will not be put at a disadvantage with any other commercial grain producer in any other part of the world. I know we will be able to do this with an improved transportation system.

● (1650)

We must remember that the government is offering to pay the current Crow gap in future years. Therefore, it is ridiculous to say that farmers' share of increased costs will lead to immediate five or tenfold jumps in charges. I say to these people, whoever they may be, that they are wrong and dishonest; it is a terrible thing to be saying.

Some people are saying that the Crow rates should not be changed because they were part of the original confederation pact and represent a permanent commitment to the west. Crow rates have nothing to do with any bargain on confederation. They are not some kind of Magna Carta. I have heard people say that they are the Magna Carta of the west. Lord help us if any other Magna Carta was similar to the Crow rates. They are not some kind of Magna Carta of inalienable western rights. The original Crowsnest Pass agreement was signed in 1897 and applied only to eastbound grain and flour shipped from some 289 CP grain delivery points. These rates were not extended to other delivery points until 1925. Moreover, westbound export grain and flour were not put under the Crow rates until 1927, and shipments through the port of Churchill did not qualify until 1931. Let us be honest and say that this is not something which is holier than anything else. Some people say, "Holy Crow". No Crow was as holy as they make out this Crow to be. No Crow could be as holy as leaders of the National Farmers Union like to indicate. I agree with them on some matters, but I have always disagreed with them on this. Should we refuse to change? No, we would be the most backward country in the world if we accepted that attitude and refused to accept change for the better. I say that this is better for all industries, not just the agricultural one, but first and foremost I think about the agricultural industry and its great potential.

There is also a myth that Crow rates are tied in with the land grants given to Canadian Pacific at the time the first transcontinental railroad was built. Some people say that CP should be forced to use profits from other operations to keep the Crow rates at their current level, because it received millions of acres of land grants and \$25 million when the railway was built through the west a century ago. There is nothing in the 1880 agreement to suggest that these grants or any returns from them should be used to offset the operating costs of the railway; not a thing. The MacPherson royal commission investigated this question in 1961. Who was in power then? It was not us. At that time it found that the sole reason for the original grants was to build the railway through to the west coast. CP received land grants of 33 million acres, and all but 1 per cent of this land was subsequently disposed of. About 6.8 million acres were returned to the federal