

Western Grain Transportation Act

next opportunity, because to call reactionary our attempt to save a rural way of life, to save small farmers in Saskatchewan so that they will continue to be economically viable, is a piece of double-speak straight out of "1984" and George Orwell's novel.

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that we should have a lesson in prairie economics concerning cattle and grain from the Hon. Member for Regina East (Mr. de Jong). I wonder how many times he has used a permit book. I wonder how many Members of his Party currently have a permit book or have used a permit book. I would like to challenge the NDP to see whether they really think they represent the farmers. I could go through our ranks and about 20 of our Members have permit books.

I do not know whether some of those characters to my left even know what a permit book even is. It is the book issued by the Canadian Wheat Board allowing one to deliver grain, which makes one a bona fide farmer. I suspect that very few, if any, of these characters to my left who want to rise and speak on all the aspects of prairie agriculture know anything about it. One would have to show them with a map, which is the business end of a steer, yet they want to give us lessons as to how to run a prairie farm.

● (1210)

The Hon. Member started speaking of North Dakota and everything dealing with the beef and packing plant industry. I would point out that we currently do have what is left of a diversified industry on the Prairies. If we keep going the way we are going, we will not have one. If the Hon. Member had wanted to travel a little further south into Nebraska or Colorado, he would have found that there is a meat processing industry in the western part of the United States. What we are discussing is maintaining the industry we have in the West and not losing it all to the East.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mayer: Therefore, if the Hon. Member wants to start discussing those matters, I suspect he should either travel a little further physically or open up his brain so that a little broader range of ideas will get into it.

The Leader of the NDP spoke of the subsidy not being a question. In many ways it is true. We are not arguing as to whether or not the prairie grain producer should have a subsidy. I think we all agree that, based on the amount of taxes that producers pay, and based on the treatment of other industries in Canada, those of us who grow and want to ship grain on the Prairies should be entitled to the same sort of consideration as many of the other industries in Canada.

Our concern is the way in which the subsidy should be paid. The NDP and the National Farmers' Union are really in concert with regard to this matter. Two years ago the National Farmers' Union filed a class action suit against the CPR for damages resulting from services not rendered. Yet now it

wants to give all this money to the CPR. I just do not understand. The Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) wears a hat. Last night I sympathized with her concern with regard to wearing a hat in the House. She pointed out that the CPR has made a profit of \$2 billion. If it has made all of this money, why does the NDP want to continue to give it more? That does not make any kind of sense. The Leader of the NDP is a renowned economist.

Mr. Orlikow: And take equity in return.

Mr. Mayer: Whatever way one wants to do it. If one takes equity back in return, one is still giving money to it.

Mr. Orlikow: No, you will share in the profit.

Mr. Mayer: A subsidy by any other name is still a subsidy. That is exactly what is being done. Why does the NDP want to give it money and take equity back when it has already made \$2 billion in the last two years? I see that I have Members of the NDP going. It reminds me of a classic statement made by Edmund Burke, a very well respected Conservative theorist in England. He said that a Conservative is someone who believes that nothing should ever be done for the first time. I think that if he were here now and could look at the NDP, he would say that the NDP is someone that believes that nothing should ever be done for the first time. That is about how enlightened and reactionary are the attitudes of its Members.

We on this side of the House, are determined that if the Government is to make any changes to the Crow, we will ensure that those changes will be improvements. The NDP is saying we should do nothing about railway capacity, but simply give the railway more money and equity. It does not do anything about comparative advantage. It wants to lose our industry to eastern Canada.

Some Hon. Members: No, no.

Mr. Mayer: That is its position. As I said, it literally boggles one's mind as to why Members of the NDP can be so opposed to giving money to the farmer.

The Leader of the New Democratic Party is purportedly an economist. If he is an economist, he will know what I mean when I mention the multiplier effect. If one gives the option to the farmer to take the money, aside from the fact that we believe in some freedom and a little bit of liberty in this country, the money will stay and be spent in his community and it will have a multiplier effect working on it two, three or four times before it is shipped out of the country, whether to Japan, Poland or wherever. If one pays the producer, at least the producer has a handle as to how some of the money will be redirected. That is one of the answers in terms of the money that will be taken out of the community when the producer is asked to pay more money.

I agree that at this particular time, when grain prices are falling and costs continue to escalate, it is a concern that the producer will be asked to pay more money. Surely, as far as the NDP is concerned, it is obvious that the producer should be given a choice as to whether he wants to see all the money