

"crow flies" route, might be available. Who in the CTC is going to consider the plight of the poor grain farmer?

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me the role of the Rail Transport Committee of the CTC has as one of its mandates the question posed by the Hon. Member. In fact, this Bill will put more onus upon the Rail Transport Committee to see that the railways operate in an efficient manner because the railways have to submit all their costing, all of their efforts to fulfil the responsibilities imposed upon them by this Bill to the CTC for verification. If they do not live up to the performance demanded of them, they will not get the credits they expect to get. The biggest stick of all to any company is the financial one. That will reside in the CTC and will be applied by the CTC. It is the responsibility of this House and the Standing Committee on Transport as a committee of this House to examine the CTC to see that it is doing its job well.

Some Hon. Members: Continue.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe there would be unanimous consent for our distinguished Chairman of the Transport Committee to continue his remarks. We would be most happy to hear him further if he wishes.

Mr. McKnight: Mr. Speaker, it is unanimous.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please. It is the Chair's understanding that the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi has terminated his speech. I do not see the point of inviting him to continue. He had time left and the Hon. Member chose to sit down. However, I will recognize the Hon. Member on a point of order.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank Hon. Members. I did not realize I was so well loved, but I have completed my remarks.

Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin-Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be able to get up at this stage in the debate to address myself to Clause 17 which deals with the powers of the Administrator and, more specifically, to Motion No. 33, which adds the phrase "the Administrator shall require". This deals with the exchange of cars in the movement of grain where such an exchange would increase the efficiency of moving grain to its export position.

I want to address some of my initial comments, perhaps even by way of rebuttal, to what the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne) said as to why this particular amendment is not necessary. He said that the CTC western division is a regulatory agency with powers adequate enough to render unnecessary this added feature of the Administrator being able to take action.

I suppose my question has to be somewhat rhetorical because the Hon. Member is not here to respond. But I have to ask, when has this authority ever worked? It has not worked to this date. I could go further and ask, when has the western

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division of the CTC ever worked? We have had some 18 rail line abandonment hearings in Manitoba. All of the decisions have gone in favour of the railways. Some of the lines under consideration are lines that would be shorter. If the Administrator had this type of power, he would be able to exercise it to compel the railways to make use of these shorter lines.

Another question asked by the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi was, if, as the Conservatives claim, they will vote against this Bill, or even if we in the New Democratic Party, as we have said, are going to vote against the Bill, why are we arguing for improving a particular clause? If the Government accepted our suggestion to split the Bill into three distinct sections and portions, I think the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi would understand we could still argue for enhancing this clause.

We are in favour of the railways being upgraded so that the producers' grain can be transported to an export position. Even with that kind of attitude and support, this type of provision for the Grain Transportation Agency, the Grain Transportation Administrator, would enhance his ability to make sure there could be this type of exchange.

Let me deal a little more specifically with this provision. I think Motion No. 33 is very important. I want to illustrate why it is important that the Administrator have the opportunity when faced with a problem, and these problems arise frequently, to be able to use his authority. I am sure those of us who represent rural ridings can recount enough horror stories of bottlenecks in the transportation of grain. This particular addition, in essence, says "The buck stops here." The Administrator is able to require the movement of grain and the exchange of cars so the grain can be transported.

I was a bit embarrassed, when this amendment was voted on in committee that all the Liberal Members voted against it. I want to emphasize to my friends opposite why the amendment is important. I want to point out the types of problems that farmers in my constituency and other constituencies face when they want to make sure the grain is moving.

● (1610)

As Members of Parliament we often have to deal with such situations. I have had to deal with situations at the elevator at Makinak. The only reason I am being very concrete is that I feel that sometimes an illustration is worth a thousand words; people understand the types of problems faced by farmers when they cannot get their grain moved. I was glad to hear some of my friends to my right talk about their concern for producers. I hope they will demonstrate this further by supporting us in our attempt to have the Bill split. When harvest has occurred, when the grain is off the field and producers have to have it moved, some of them cannot afford to have it sit idle in storage. It may be that they do not have enough storage space, especially smaller farmers such as the ones in my constituency, and it is essential that the grain be moved quickly. There have been occasions when I telephoned the railways inquiring as to why cars were not on certain sidings at Makinak, at Fork River or in other areas of my riding.