

Western Grain Transportation Act

those orders so that they can travel throughout western Canada talking out of both sides of their mouths; they are not for the Crow rate, they would tamper with the Crow rate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order. On occasion Hon. Members interrupt on what they refer to as a point of order and it becomes evident later that it is not a valid point of order. I do not want to predispose any views but I hope Hon. Members will try to raise only those points which they firmly believe are valid points of order. The Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker).

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, my point of order relates to the relevancy of the comments. Perhaps the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) would say why his Party wants \$650 million to go to the railways.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order.

Mr. Thacker: Why the railways rather than the people?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that of the Conservative Party of Canada have made it clear that they would tamper with the Crow rate. The only difference between them and the Liberals is that they would tamper with it somewhat differently. The details of this Bill would be different under a Progressive Conservative administration but the principle would remain the same. That principle would be capitulation to the blackmail that the railways of Canada have been practising on the economy and people of Canada for some time now, in spite of all the subsidies for rail line improvement and in spite of all the hopper cars that have been given to them.

If the Progressive Conservative Party was in Government it would make the same moves. Only the details would be different. That is why we see Hon. Members weaving in and out of the debate and in and out of opposition to the Bill we see before us. They are torn between opposing the legislation and what they know they would do themselves.

That is why I was even more astounded at the hypocrisy of the Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) who said that we were somehow responsible for the VIA Rail cut-backs. Who has done more over the years to bring discredit to the idea of Crown corporations? Who has most often declared that anything which does not make money can be sacrificed on the altar of profit motive? The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada is the Party that has heaped criticism for years on VIA Rail and passenger rail service in the country. They are the Party who created the political context through which it was possible for the Liberals, finally taking Progressive Conservative advice, to implement the VIA Rail cut-backs. Yet the Conservatives have the nerve to say that we are somehow responsible for those cut-backs. It becomes hard to swallow after a while.

The Liberal Government has the opportunity to show for the first time since I have been here that it has the ability to listen to Members of the Opposition and the opportunity to learn

from the energy that we are putting into this debate and our commitment to stop this Bill. A government which does not have any Members in the west should take a second look at what it is proposing to do to western Canada. The Government should rethink this whole Bill through and should drop the whole idea. The Crow rate has to be maintained. The Government can upgrade the railways in a half a dozen different ways and it would have our support in making an attempt to do so. But the Government does not have to change the Crow rate and do this on the backs of Canadian grain producers.

● (2010)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, one cannot help wonder, after listening to the unimaginative, unconstructive, irrelevant remarks presented to this House and to this nation first by the Hon. Member for Selkirk-Interlake (Mr. Sargeant), then by the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly), and lastly we heard the babblings of the little birds in the birds' nest from Birds Hill.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCain: This Government has handled the problems of transportation in this nation irresponsibly. I challenge those people on our left to address the transportation problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a legitimate point of order. When I was a kid my mother used to say "Sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me." Nevertheless, I wish that Hon. Members would stop abusing the name of the riding which I represent by referring to it in the half dozen ways they have a habit of doing. The name of the riding is Winnipeg-Birds Hill. That is what I prefer it to be called out of respect for my constituents, if not out of respect for me, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): The point is well taken.

The Hon. Member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain).

Mr. McCain: Mr. Speaker, I have no concern. I have the greatest admiration for the people of Winnipeg-Birds Hill. They made an error in judgment, as did a number of constituents in many ridings in Canada. I am quite confident after that speech is circulated in the Hon. Member's area that they will certainly not be repetitive in their erroneous judgment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCain: I want to address transportation problems in Canada. If the mainspring in those people who want to interfere with the discussion on transportation would ever unwind,