

Western Grain Transportation Act

together as a nation from west to east while recognizing the vastness of our country and the varying regional needs.

On June 16, I spoke in the House about the reasons why the Crowsnest freight rates must be maintained and I do not want to repeat myself in detail. We must keep the Crow to maintain the promise of Confederation and also to alleviate current costs of grain transportation to western farmers. Transportation costs should be shared by all Canadians just as costs of transportation and other systems are shared. Railways were more than fairly compensated for the Crow rate. The CPR has grown rich on land, mineral and forest rights given to it as part of the original agreement. However, we in this Party have said that if the railways can show definite proven losses on grain shipment, the taxpayers should assist with costs up to \$380 million. But there must be no more giveaways.

On June 16, I referred also to the penalties which would occur in British Columbia if grain rates were increased by the Liberals and as advocated by the Tories. It would mean a 30 per cent cut in income for British Columbia farmers by the year 1992. That is something which many British Columbians do not realize. Also, Mr. Speaker, it would inevitably result in a diversion of grain through the United States on the new rails that the CP and CN are upgrading already. This of course would mean a loss of jobs, particularly for the shipping industry in British Columbia and for grain workers, longshoremen and many other tradespeople. It would also have an impact on British Columbia consumers who would have to pay five cents more for a loaf of bread.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I discovered by reading a book called "To Kill the Crow" by John Gallagher that the loss of income to British Columbians would be \$3,553,000 according to Mr. Gallagher. British Columbians would suffer dramatically as would those on the Prairies and all Canadians.

The second issue that we felt should be dealt with quite separately is the whole question of the upgrading of rail transportation and the transportation system generally for the shipment of grain and coal and other products. This should be dealt with entirely separate from the Crow rate, Mr. Speaker. We have long advocated that improvements and modernization of the transportation systems are long overdue.

Some people have argued that we are against creating jobs and against transportation improvements. Those arguments are completely mythical, Mr. Speaker. We are strongly in favour of improvements. There must be improvement of rails and tunnels, and of course we would like to see a re-establishment of a modern boxcar manufacturing facility, particularly in British Columbia. The Modern Squamish Rail Car plant which employed over 300 people was done away with by the Social Credit and Liberal governments at a time when it was most needed. Of course, we would also see improved shipping facilities as an adjunct to this.

But we insist, Mr. Speaker, that no taxpayers' money be invested in the railway companies unless the people of Canada have equity in exchange. There must be no more giveaways to the Canadian Pacific Railway which has a history of exploiting them in order to escalate their own profits. As you know, Mr.

Speaker, we have advocated an investment of \$550 million to improve rail transportation and to create jobs.

The third issue is the releasing of Dominion Government coal lands and is another issue which I do not believe the people of British Columbia are fully aware of. Back in the 1880s, the people of British Columbia gave the CPR a large coal deposit which was put in reserve with the federal Government. The plan of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) will remove the price ceiling on this coal but it does not indicate who will own and benefit from the \$450 million reserve. This resource belongs to the people of British Columbia and the federal Government should return it to provincial control. There has been no accountability by the Government on this question in debating this Bill.

I would like to refer again to the recently published book, "To Kill the Crow", by John Gallagher. The whole book is very relevant to this debate, and there are several excerpts which I believe are particularly relevant. I would first like to read a quote from Mr. Justice Emmett Hall:

If once tampering with the statutory rate is accepted or condoned or is an item on the bargaining table, all will be lost. For once the subject is on the bargaining table, it will be only a matter of time until it is lost step by step. There is no position to take except to adhere through thick and thin that the Crow Rate is not bargainable.

This has been the position taken by this Party, the only Party to say that we must maintain the Crow through thick and thin. As was written on the hats we wore this afternoon, "Maintain the Crow, Pepin must go."

Well, what positions have the other Parties taken on this issue, Mr. Speaker? We know the position taken by the Liberals. As Mr. Gallagher said, "the activities and positions of the federal Liberals are well known". He presents considerable documentation to prove the giveaways that are involved, both the denial of promises to western farmers as well as the giveaways to the railways. Incidentally, I learned that stockholders of the CPR were richer by over \$134 million the day the federal Government's determination to repudiate the Crowsnest Pass Agreement was announced.

What about Members of the Progressive Conservative Party? Where do they stand aside from their attack on the NDP which occurred today? They obviously attacked us because we are their key opposition and because they know that we are the only ones who have been continuously in support of the Crow rate and of transportation improvements. Half of the Members of the Conservative Party are for a modified version of the Crow rate because they happen to live in the West. Certainly they are not for it in the same way that we have been for it. Half of the Members are against it. I would like to know where this leaves western farmers, Mr. Speaker.

What about the eastern millionaire who is the new leader of the Progressive Conservative Party? We know that he has joined that other Quebec millionaire and that they take the same position on this Bill.

An Hon. Member: What is wrong with being successful?