

*Western Grain Transportation Act*

Every Province in the country is now operating with a deficit. Yet we have here a proposal to increase—

**Mr. Blaikie:** Saskatchewan wasn't until the Tories got in.

**Mr. Orlikow:** My colleague says that Saskatchewan did not have a deficit until the Tories got in. Well, that is a fact but perhaps this is not the time to discuss that.

We have here a proposal made by the Government which inevitably will mean that more and more grain will be shipped by truck rather than by rail. It seems pretty obvious to me that that means that the farmers may have a short-term gain but they will have long-term pain.

The occupation of a farmer, Mr. Speaker, is to produce grain. They are also citizens of the Provinces in which they live and, as citizens, they have to help meet the cost of operating the Province. One of the biggest items in the cost of operating a Province is the construction and maintenance of highways.

We heard the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) a few moments ago tell us that the new 18-wheel trucks do not affect the highways. I am not an expert on highways but I will put on the record some of the views that are held on that question by people who are experts. I believe that the Hon. Member for Assiniboia is wrong, but let us assume for a moment that the larger trucks that are carrying heavier and heavier loads of grain will not have an adverse effect on the main highways such as the Trans-Canada Highway and others.

I am not now speaking about the Province of Saskatchewan which has more roads than any other Province in the country. I am speaking about my own Province of Manitoba. Half of the geographic area of my constituency is farm country. This area is served by provincial trunk highways and local roads. Those roads are not covered in concrete or asphalt and if they are, it is a very thin coating at most. Many of those roads are still covered with gravel or oil. I would ask Hon. Members to give some thought to—

**Mr. McKnight:** Maybe you didn't do such a good job.

**Mr. Orlikow:** I did not hear the Hon. Member's interjection but I do not suppose it is of very much consequence.

I would ask Hon. Members to give some thought to what will happen in two, three, four or five years if heavy trucks carrying tonnes of grain travel on those roads. Those roads will disappear. They will need major repairs if not complete rebuilding. Who will pay for that, Mr. Speaker? It will be the city worker and the farmer who saved a little money at the beginning because he could truck his grain. He will now have to pay for the major reconstruction of those roads which he has used. Again I say, Mr. Speaker, that what we are looking at is possible short-term gain and certain long-term gain.

● (1720)

Let me deal with the argument presented by the Hon. Member for Assiniboia to the effect that trucks do not harm the highways. I should like to quote a couple of paragraphs

from a paper delivered to a Minneapolis conference on agricultural transportation in November, 1981, by Jerry E. Fruin, an associate professor of agricultural and applied economics, at the University of Minnesota. In its physical characteristics, Minnesota is very much like my part of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. There are lots of people spread out thinly and lots of access roads to main highways. In that paper Prof. Fruin said:

The stress exerted on highway pavement increases as the fourth power of the axle load. When axle weight increases from 18,000 pounds to 20,000 pounds, stress from that axle increases by roughly 50 percent. An 80,000-pound truck weighs 20 times as much as an automobile, but its combined axles cause 9,600 times as much stress on the pavement and roadbed.

A U.S. Department of Transportation study concluded that a 10 percent increase in maximum truck weight would decrease fuel consumption by 0.37 percent, but this might be offset by accelerated highway deterioration. If pavement deterioration continues to exceed repavement efforts at current rates, vehicle fuel efficiency in 1985 could decrease by 2.4 per cent. Fuel consumption at 40 miles per hour over badly patched asphalt increases 34 percent over fuel consumption on high quality pavement. Poor road surface increases energy consumption for all vehicles, not just trucks.

There is no question but that the roads will deteriorate. It will cost money to rebuild those roads and, as the professor indicates, eventually it will mean increased fuel consumption.

Who will benefit by encouraging the transportation of grain by truck? Oddly enough, the beneficiaries will be the railways. Both CN and CP are actively involved in the trucking business. CN recently consolidated the 3,000 pieces of highway equipment from its 13 trucking companies into a single entity to form its nation-wide Route Canada Trucking Service, now the largest trucking company in the country.

Canadian Pacific Express and Transport Limited is stationed in 194 locations across Canada and the eastern United States. These subsidiaries operate about 1,000 trucks, 3,000 highway trailers, 400 city trailers, 500 city tractors and 500 highway tractors. It is not difficult to imagine that both companies will be actively engaged in trucking grain from branch lines to centralized delivery points on their own rail lines.

This circumstance casts an interesting sidelight on the total concept of competition as between the CP and CN vertically integrated ownership trucking companies and independent truckers who have been gearing up to get part of the action. The problem is that in this country we have never really thought of integrating all modes of transportation. A few years ago I was in Germany and met with the equivalent of the Deputy Minister of Transport. He told our Party that the bus companies had requested permission to operate at a higher speed limit on the autobahn, which is the equivalent of our throughways. He said that it would not be permitted because it would mean that the buses could compete with the railways for passenger service and the Government wanted to keep the railways operating and cost efficient, moving as many passengers as possible. On the morning that we left Bonn we saw the Minister and the Deputy Minister on the platform, waiting for a train. I wonder when was the last time that a minister or deputy minister of the Canadian Government travelled by train.