

venture to say years. He gives an answer with respect to what the sanctions are going to be with respect to the railways. If I may be permitted to paraphrase, he said it is "a hit and miss system".

Eventually we hope that, after the benefit of some years of experience, maybe we will come to some conclusions as to what we should do to hold the railways accountable. But Mr. Kroeger's last sentence was quite revealing. He said that maybe we will find that the whole thing is unworkable. That gives precious little hope to the people of western Canada who have been sold a bill of goods, if we pass this legislation, that we will have an improved railway system to deliver the goods, that we will have a system efficient in the highest degree, and second to none in the world in terms of the transportation of grain. Yet when we look at the actual reality, what is contained in the legislation, no one can make any sense out of it. Even the Deputy Minister is not sure how it is going to work and refers to the concept of "notional" as being a hit and miss proposition. I simply say that is not satisfactory.

This is one of the reasons those of us who are privileged to come from western Canada and represent agricultural areas cannot in conscience support this legislation. We can make attempts, as the NDP for whatever reason are making attempts, to amend this legislation to bring some reality to it, and I give the NDP credit for that attempt. But this is badly thought out in terms of having the railways and other components of the grain delivery area made accountable to the Administrator with respect to failing to live up to reasonable expectations.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is one of the fundamental reasons, if I may be permitted to say so, that it is impossible for us to support this legislation. In this case the NDP is attempting to limit accountability for all intents and purposes to the railways. My colleague, the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), has pointed out very well recently that we cannot limit this accountability to the railways because there are so many components in terms of delivery and the efficient delivery of grain in western Canada. All of these components must be accountable and all of these different areas must have accountability to the western producer and the people of Canada.

Mr. Len Gustafson (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the grouping of motions relating to the work of the Administrator with regard to sanctions, there are two things that I would like to point out. First is the importance of the work of the Administrator as it refers to the actual movement of grain in the bottlenecks that may occur on the Prairies. It is interesting to note that the NDP have tried to be on both sides of this issue at the same time.

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Gustafson: I hear someone say no. But if you go back and identify exactly who the Grain Administrator is, Mr. Speaker, you will see that the Conservatives under our administration introduced a grains co-ordinator, Mr. Hugh

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Horner. He identified many of the problems and many of the bottlenecks that were in the system. Actually we have a grains administrator in place. At that time Members will remember the hue and cry from the NDP. The NDP did not want a grains co-ordinator at all. If Members of the NDP would go back over their records and statements in this House, they will find their statements were diametrically opposed to what is happening here.

I think we have a situation where we must take the best of both worlds and try to amend these areas so that things will work in the best interests of the producer. The Hon. Member for Vegreville pointed out that there is more to the movement of grain than just the component of the railroads. It is most important that the railroads move grain efficiently and effectively. It is most important that a grain collecting system—the grain elevators on the Prairies—is able to co-ordinate with the railroads.

By way of example, I had a phone call this morning from Boyle, Alberta, where one of the grain elevators in Boyle is absolutely congested. As you know, the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board has increased the initial price for barley. He has done that in order to get some barley into the system. He told me that there were many carloads of barley in that little town in northern Alberta which were not being shipped into the system and had not arrived at Thunder Bay. At the same time the Canadian Wheat Board tells us that there have been major problems in meeting its barley obligations. This is what I would call a bit of a bottleneck. Hopefully that situation will be straightened out in a telephone call today.

• (1240)

An administrator could identify these bottlenecks and attempt to straighten them out. On one hand, the New Democratic Party is giving the Administrator some power to deal directly with the railroads but not with the terminals, grain elevators or areas which are faced with strikes that can be very detrimental to the whole business of grain transportation. When prairie farmers hear of strikes, they are very, very concerned. If there has been one area of bottleneck in the whole system, it has been the area of strikes. Practically without exception every fall at the ports in Vancouver and Thunder Bay, just before freeze-up, there are strike scares. There have been hold-ups in the movement of grain because of strikes which have cost farmers millions and millions of dollars. A grain Administrator, working in the capacity which was set by the example of Dr. Hugh Horner, could be of great benefit by bringing to the attention of the Government, producers and all those people involved in grain handling the situation that exists. It would work in the best interests of producers and the larger system.

We have some problems with the approach of the NDP. As pointed out by the Hon. Member for Vegreville, we are in agreement with Motion No. 37 which, of course, would not penalize primary producers in a financial manner by penalizing grain elevators on the local scene. That is important.