

gonna help the country very much at all. Unfortunately, the big losers will be the farmers.

**Mr. Pepin:** No, no.

**Mr. Sargeant:** The farmers cannot afford to pay any more money in their costs.

**Mr. Pepin:** I listened to you all day and you all say the same thing.

**Mr. Sargeant:** If further costs are added to the farmers' operations, those farmers will go belly up. The economy of the country will not benefit in the long run.

I will leave the subject there. Perhaps at some other point in the debate I will have an opportunity to carry on and make some other very well founded, very sensible points and, hopefully, try to pound some sense into the heads of the Government Members opposite.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be able to participate in the debate tonight and to respond to some of the comments made by my colleagues to my right, the Progressive Conservatives, and then of course I will also have some time for the Government as well with regard to this issue.

First, I would like to answer some of the immature ravings of various Conservative backbenchers about the way in which the New Democratic Party is somehow responsible for the defeat of the Conservative Government in 1979. I have said before that I think it is about time the Conservative Party put that issue behind them and realized once and for all that it was they who lost the election of February 1980 for themselves and not the NDP. I thought they had done this at their convention a couple of weeks ago.

● (2000)

Indeed, we moved the traditional motion of non-confidence as we were expected to move after the budget in December, 1979. We would have been criticized had we not moved such a motion. As we all know, the Government fell. That did not mean that the Progressive Conservative Party had to proceed to lose the election. Other Governments have been defeated in the House and have gone on to win subsequent elections. I really believe that it is a matter of growing up and taking responsibility for your own political destiny. The Conservatives should finally come to the conclusion that perhaps they did something wrong. In fact, I think they did come to that conclusion except that they heaped all of the blame on one man, their leader.

If there was something intrinsically wrong with the defeat of the Clark Government, they have added insult to injury by themselves getting rid of the very political person about whom they are so self righteous when talking about the NDP role. I just wanted to put that on the record. I am responding to what has already been said in the debate and in that sense I believe I am staying within the bounds of relevancy.

### *Western Grain Transportation Act*

Every once in a while there are matters debated in this House on which Members who oppose a particular Government proposal have occasion to make predictions about the consequences of the particular legislation. Since those consequences can only happen in the future, they are always in the position of being unable to prove that what they say is the case. Therefore, it is a matter of trust and making a judgment about what the consequences of a particular piece of legislation will be. For our part in the House, we have made that judgment about what will happen to western Canada when the Crow rate is tampered with.

We share the judgment of former Chief Justice Hall that the minute one begins to tamper with the Crow rate an entire way of life in western Canada is being placed in jeopardy. That is what we are protesting in our debates. We cannot prove that this will happen, just like we could not prove in 1966 that the arguments for freeing up the interest rate would lead to higher and higher interest rates and mortgage payments. We could not prove the argument at that time that greater competition leading to even lower interest rates was wrong. However it did turn out to be wrong.

When we argued against the pre-build of the southern portion of the pipeline in 1980 and that the other portion of the pipeline would never be built, we could not prove that. But three years later that pipeline is yet to be built and that pipeline in all likelihood will never be built. Those who believed the Government then, that is the Conservative Party, and those who believed the Government in 1966, that is the Conservative Party, have been proven wrong on both of those issues.

We could not prove in 1977 that proceeding to block funding for medicare would mean the gradual erosion of medicare in Canada, yet it has. We could not prove it at that time. Again, the Liberals and Conservatives stood together.

We admit that we are at somewhat of a disadvantage. And even though we might lose this one we will not be comforted by the consolation of being able to say 10 or 15 years from now that we told you so and we were right all along; that first it was the Crow rate and then the Canadian Wheat Board, and on until we saw the eventual destruction of the economic structures that were built up over the years in western Canada to give western Canadians more control over their own economic life. That is what we are debating here tonight.

What is wrong with the Progressive Conservative position? We are glad to have them on the side opposing this Bill, although weakly and in a somewhat token manner. One day they help and the next day they decline. They are unable to make a decision. It is clear that the Conservatives would very much like to have this legislation passed so that this issue will be out of the way before the next election. As the Hon. Member for Selkirk-Interlake (Mr. Sargeant) so clearly pointed out, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." The same fellow who pays the Liberal Party is the one who pays the Progressive Conservative Party to the tune of approximately \$200,000 each. They know that they will have to follow the same orders from the CPR. They want the Liberals to follow