

cannot deliver Liberal votes like they do in Quebec and other parts of Canada that this Bill is drafted to protect". That is the sickness of this Government.

The Minister of Transport makes fun of this very fundamental concept. Certainly there is competition to gain a seat in this House. We all go out and campaign. But when we get here, we represent every man, woman and child in the riding. The highest honour that can be bestowed on a man in this country is when he is made Prime Minister. Certainly he is there because he campaigned and because he got the support of a certain party; but he represents every Canadian from coast to coast. He should not have the unmitigated gall to say to people: "You can't deliver the votes; therefore we are putting through a Bill that we recognize is not economically sound, that we recognize is not right, but you cannot deliver Liberal votes in western Canada".

A sickness pervades this Government, Mr. Speaker. We have here a Bill that we cannot even comprehend.

Mr. Chénier: Go to school. Learn to read.

● (1220)

Mr. Shields: The Hon. Member opposite says "Learn to read". I would like to suggest to him that he just read through the Bill once.

Basically, Mr. Speaker, I believe the tenet is true that all Members of Parliament come here with the idea that they are going to do the best they possibly can for their constituency and for their country. I believe there is a real sense of purpose in a person who runs for office and comes to the House of Commons. I give that to the Hon. Members for the Liberal Party which forms the Government, and I give that to the Hon. Members for the New Democratic Party. I may not always agree with them, but there should be a system prevailing which allows us to sit down and discuss a Bill.

When Bills are introduced in this House and put on the Order Paper, they are printed and every Hon. Member gets a copy of the Bill. They are left there for two months so that pressure groups, lobby groups and interested groups from across the country can have input. But what has happened here? I cannot understand the Minister of Transport doing this because he is an honourable man. I have always admired his honesty and the straightforward way he speaks about issues. Did the House Leader say to the Minister of Transport, "We will ram it through with closure"? I cannot understand this because it is not in character with the Minister of Transport. It is truly not, Mr. Speaker.

I suggest to the Minister that he give the necessary time to allow interest groups from across the country to study the Bill. Surely he has read the Bill. Surely he cannot honestly stand up in this House and say that he understands all the provisions, that he can work out what it is going to cost a producer in northern Alberta to ship his grain, how much a bushel? The legal experts cannot get through the legal jargon; how can he pretend that he can? How can he pretend that we can? It is badly worded legislation. It is bad legislation at a time when

costs of producers are going up increasingly every day. How can we expect a producer to survive if we increase his freight rate, the cost to him, by 400 per cent?

We recognized that situation in this House when it hit the home owner. We recognized immediately that the home owner, who was locked into a mortgage and then had to renew his mortgage when interest rates were so high, would have his payments doubled in some cases. We recognized that in this House, every one of us, and we were prepared to sit down and try to do something about it. I suggest to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, that we are prepared to do something; we are prepared to sit down, we are prepared to say to the farmer "We will give you a choice". We are prepared to work on it, but we cannot do it in two or three days. This Bill is totally and absolutely wrong. The way this Bill is drafted is an outlandish attack on the producers of western Canada.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say, through you, Sir, to my colleague the Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields), and to my colleague the Hon. Member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser), that the voices which you are hearing today are the voices of Hon. Members from across Canada. They are expressing the views of the people across Canada on this Crow rate Bill which is before this House.

As a Member of Parliament for a riding in northeastern Ontario, I must say that my constituents will be directly affected by this legislation. Many of them are concerned about this legislation and its implications. There is a large agricultural community within my riding of Timiskaming and the farmers of northern Ontario share many of the concerns of their colleagues in western Canada. I must say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Timmins-Chapleau (Mr. Chénier), being from northern Ontario, should have concern for transportation in northern Ontario.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDougall: Like western Canada, northeastern Ontario was developed as a result of the construction of a railway. The railway was the lifeline of many small communities. The character and nature of those communities developed in stride with the railway. The rail line was the transportation link to distant markets and a key factor in the economic well being of the farming community.

The effect that freight rates can have on individual farmers and the agricultural industry is a well-known fact in northern Ontario. This Bill could have a devastating effect on the economy and lifestyle of western Canada. The Crowsnest Pass statutory freight rate has been the basis for the system of production, distribution, marketing and transportation of grain for decades. Every farmer knew what his transportation costs would be each year. It was simple and it was stable. It was one of the few constant factors in an industry that is subject to the whims of nature. Because of the impact this legislation will have, one would think that the Government would proceed with caution and attempt to reach a consensus with all who are