

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Saskatoon East (Mr. Ogle) was on his feet. Was it for debate or to raise a point or order?

Mr. Ogle: Debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will recognize the Hon. Member for York-Peel.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the Hon. Member would reply to the question, which is simply this: As he has such preconceived notions concerning the Crow, does he feel that he can carry on as a truly neutral chairman of the committee to consider the Bill?

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): I would be glad to answer that question, Mr. Speaker. I have no preconceived notions about the Crow except to know that what was good in the nineteenth century is not necessarily, absolutely good in the twentieth century. That is what makes me different from the Hon. Member who just rose to ask me a question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East): Tonight, Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that there is much emotional tension in the House, yet we are debating a matter which I think, and I believe everyone in the House thinks, is a serious matter. It is important that when we discuss this matter we consider it seriously, we study it and we take advice. I say that for myself in the same way I say it for everyone else in the House.

The question involving the Crow is something which has been part and parcel of the life of the person who was born on the Prairies. I am a prairie person, as are many other Hon. Members. We will all attest to the fact that the Crow rate was something which was part and parcel of our upbringing. For that reason, people on the Prairies have always been worried when there was talk of a serious change in the socioeconomic structure put in place to make it possible for them to live in equality with the rest of the people in Canada. I think the people in this House understand that fact.

In past years, studying the problem of grain transportation on the Prairies has taken on a big proportion of the time and expense of western Canadians. Mr. Justice Hall, the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, has made a name for himself, as a Canadian person, as a result of his great care for the social and health needs of Canadians. As well, Mr. Justice Hall was asked to chair a commission to study specifically rail transportation and grain handling in the West. The commission studied the problem of the upgrading of railroads and the problem of how grain would be moved and how the movement would be financed, and then produced a report which I am sure everyone here has seen. This took place several years ago.

Mr. Justice Emmett Hall presented a summary of the commission's findings with regard to the Crow rate at a rally called "Keep the Crow" in Regina on November 24, 1981. Although I suspect that everyone here knows what Mr. Justice Hall said in the summary, it is important to consider his advice

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again. We have all taken advice sometime in our lives from our fathers, mothers, teachers, priests, ministers, grandfathers or from other older persons. As our life experiences went on, we frequently found that such advice became increasingly valid.

At the meeting in Regina in November of 1981, Mr. Justice Hall said, "If once tampering with the statutory rate is accepted or condoned or is an item put on the bargaining table, all will be lost". It was not a relative matter. He said, "All will be lost. For once the subject is on the bargaining table, it will only be a matter of time until it is lost, step by step". That is advice given by a person in whom I have great faith, one who understands the problem thoroughly. He went on to speak a little further at the rally. He said:

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There is no position to take except to adhere through thick and thin that the Crow rate is not bargainable.

I repeat that this is serious advice.

He then explained what the Government had already done. He said:

Railways have been given the use, rent-free, of 14,000 hopper cars which cost roughly seven hundred million dollars besides money to rehabilitate their own fleet of boxcars—and money to rehabilitate their neglected lines on which they have been collecting subsidy.

Justice Hall clearly indicated that in order to carry the grain of western Canadian farmers it would require an input to ensure that the machinery and lines were in place to do that.

However, in the termination of his speech that day he concluded with what I would consider a kind of threat. It was a threat to those who had tampered. He said:

Lastly, all grain producers and particularly those in Saskatchewan must be alerted to the fact that if the Crow rate can be breached and in time lost, that the next assault will be against the Wheat Board itself and the system of orderly marketing the west now enjoys. The danger signals can now be detected and must be recognized for what they will do in the long run.

I suggest that that is extremely serious. I suggest that this advice should not be taken lightly.

During this continuing debate Members have attempted to rise, sometimes in frustration, and say the same thing, through other means, but to flag the danger of what is taking place and not to listen to that kind of advice.

It has been suggested this evening that Members on the Government side do not have any seats in western Canada. That is an obvious and clear statement. It is an important fact because if one is not close to the advice it cannot be heard. When making those types of judgments without hearing the advice clearly, the odds are that a poor judgment will be made.

Again, I ask the Government side to reconsider seriously the advice that has been given to all of us by Chief Justice Hall. His statement did not concern any particular situation. When he gave us that advice through his report and later through his travels across Canada, he made it absolutely clear that he was against any tampering with the Crow rate.

I too would offer some advice. Since the Government's ear is a long way away from that of the Members who represent that