

quicksand. But there is an overriding concern—this Crow reform effort is turning out to be too divisive between regions and within regions to be safely pursued. A new beginning must be made, a fresh approach found. And most importantly, new players must enter the game. It is a part of the reality that the Government must face that, in large measure, the wall of resistance to the present Crow initiative is because of massive distrust of the central power force in the country.

It goes on to say:

A new political force, which is almost certain to emerge following the next general election, may have better luck at tackling the job.

There is no doubt about that.

But even with western support for the governing Party, it will be a difficult one.

The Liberals cannot succeed. Their best bet is to keep the present statute intact and hope the creaky rail system holds together until someone else can find a way to fix it, and maintain the viability of the agriculture industry at the same time.

As well, the Palliser Wheat Growers Association, in a news release from May, 1983, pointed out:

PALLISER REPRESENTATIVES SEE  
PRODUCER CHOICE AS THE ULTIMATE  
COMPROMISE

Palliser Crow Committee Chairman Paul Orsak and Executive Co-ordinator Barbara Isman were in Ottawa on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday with other major farm group representatives to investigate the possibility of achieving a key amendment to Ottawa's Crow Reform legislation. This amendment being the option for producers to individually decide whether they wish to receive their portion of the Crow Gap Benefit directly or pay it to the railways.

Orsak expressed optimism for this possible solution to the division which has existed between farm groups. He said, "Western Canada has lost a great deal because governments and farm groups were unable to develop a consensus. While major farm groups, the Saskatchewan and Alberta Governments believe in the producer payment method, the prairie Pools felt it would jeopardize their position. This created a rift which allowed Quebec to make the decision for Western Canadians."

Which is totally wrong. He continues:

The option was initially brought forward by Don Mazankowski as an alternative to forcing one method or another upon Western farmers. Orsak agreed that this option would be fairest to all concerned. He explains, "As there is no difference in net cost to farmers under either method a farmer can opt for whichever method he or she feels most comfortable with."

Isman also agreed that this is the fairest solution, saying "The additional benefit to producer choice is that it will be a true test of which method works best. Then when the comprehensive review comes up in 1985-86, a clear decision can be made."

Both Orsak and Isman feel it is imperative that Western farmers move quickly to give an opinion on the compromise because Ottawa is moving rapidly toward implementation of the current bill which is a Quebec solution to a Western problem. Orsak expressed his belief that the Federal Government could be made to change their mind if a Western consensus was reached.

It is imperative that the Government hoist the Bill for at least six months so it can consider the representations from these knowledgeable groups and individuals.

**Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey):** Mr. Speaker, the debate which has occurred on the Crow thus far has been one that has impressed me as containing two major elements. The first concerns the process through which we have gone and the second relates to the substantive issues.

The process which we have experienced thus far is one that should discourage anyone who has followed the Pepin proposal and the prior Hall Commission and Gilson reports. Not only

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western Members of Parliament, who are particularly affected by the Bill, but the whole country has not had the opportunity in the first instance to become part of the proposal to help develop and improve a system which everyone agrees is in some jeopardy since it does not have the proper mechanisms not only for improving grain transportation but for the entire rail system. These problems have not been properly considered by Parliament.

When the Minister finally did make a proposal which took into account all other recommendations and presented it to us, that proposal was changed once again for what must be described as very crass, partisan political purposes. Yet again the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has contributed to offending western Members by saying that those who could yell the loudest would be heard and in fact be responsible for changes that are now before us. We have seen a number of occurrences as a result of different representatives from various groups lobbying on one side or the other. We have seen some grand conversions on the part of some railway officials. One such incident was described very well a short while ago by the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mr. Hungtinton).

As a Member, I have found the whole process disturbing as I watched it evolve with arbitrary changes which do not include what I would consider responsible input by Members of Parliament, particularly from this side. Clearly, Members from the Government side of the House do not understand what is important on behalf of the grain producers in western Canada.

Even as recently as today and last week, we saw the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) stand in his place and indicate his intention to bring in time allocation on debate. We have seen the concern that has been raised by the NDP regarding the number of different principles involved in this Bill. It is a mini omnibus Bill, if you like. All of these factors should give anyone who is considering this proposal some concern with respect to its process. That in itself is enough to ask the Government to back away and let the substance of this issue come before a committee before the Bill is put through. It could then be properly considered after proper representations have been made. That is the first major point.

Returning to the substance of the Bill, in my opinion it concerns an issue which affects not only western grain producers but almost all matters that are important to our country. The Bill ranges from the rail system itself, which was so important in the beginning of our country toward uniting it and achieving Confederation, to questions regarding the farm economy. If there is anything that is vulnerable right now, it must be the farm economy. This Bill and some of the elements in it could affect the farm economy. Listening to the grain prices this morning on the radio we heard that a significant drop has occurred in the last few days. That kind of pressure is being felt by the agricultural producers. This, I think, threatens some of the basic economic factors that are important to