

*Income Tax*

Let us treat one another equally when it comes to the accessibility to, the use of and the cost of transportation. Of course it would cost money, but that would help Canadian unity. Let us treat people equally, no matter where they live. That would increase the assets and the well-being of the nation as a whole. Let us stop worrying about competition, about whether the CPR made a profit last year and about whether the CNR should be instructed to make a profit and sell off profit centres to private enterprise. Let us stop thinking of dollars instead of people and our nation.

What has happened to grain prices? The drop in net farm income in this nation and in the three prairie provinces has been one of the biggest drops in the last 20 or 30 years. Let us stop attacking the statutory Crowsnest pass grain rates, as they are commonly called. There is justification for that because those rates are beneficial to Canada as a whole. They are in place for the benefit of Canada as a whole, and they are not some subsidy or gift to prairie producers.

Those who attack the statutory grain rates are not interested in the welfare of this nation. They are not interested in protecting our grain producers or enabling them to compete with other nations in the world which export grain. Those who attack the statutory grain rates conveniently forget that our competitors produce their grain much closer to export centres than do our producers in Canada. Most of the grain production in Australia and Argentina is within a very short distance of ports. Even the grain that is produced far inland in the United States and the Soviet Union has access to cheap river water transportation. Canadian grain has to travel thousands of miles to get to export centres in competing with grain produced in other nations. That is the reason and the total justification for the statutory grain rates. For the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) or anyone else to attack those rates or to suggest that somehow farmers should get the benefit of the rates in some other way is irresponsible. If the Minister of Transport thinks he is going to emulate Jimmy Gardiner and the Prairie Farm Assistance Act and run around handing every grain farmer a government cheque for wheat or refunds on freight charges for grain movements, he has another think coming. Neither the minister's party nor any other party would get away with that.

To attack those statutory rates would be a betrayal not only of western Canada but of something which is of massive benefit to Canada as a whole. What those grain exports mean to our country in terms of balance of payments alone more than offsets any costs there may be because of the statutory grain rates. I submit that any legitimate deficits transportation companies have on moving grain out of the prairies to export centres should be made up out of the treasury of the nation as a whole and paid directly to the transportation companies—two cheques a year. That is a sensible, fair and proper way to maintain the statutory grain rates for grain producers in western Canada while at the same time paying a reasonable price to transportation companies for moving it.

Orderly marketing is essential to the well-being of producers of many kinds of agricultural products in all parts of Canada.

[Mr. Benjamin.]

The attacks on orderly marketing in western Canada continue, aided and abetted—I am sad to say—by some politicians. The minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board enlarged what was started by a former Conservative minister of agriculture by putting feed grains on the open market, with the support of the official opposition, in spite of the fact that the three prairie wheat pools and the United Grain Growers, which represent something in the order of 80 per cent or 90 per cent of grain producers, objected. The most recent example, I am very sad to say—and I know there are many Conservatives on the prairies who are horrified and shocked at this happening—was when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) was in Manitoba in August. He is reported in the *Valley Times* of the Pembina Valley as saying—and this has been verified by the notes of two reporters who were there—the following:

—expansion of the Wheat Board's selling efforts, but permission given to private organizations to sell grain in competition with the Wheat Board. Mr. Clark said private organizations working alongside the Wheat Board would "stimulate" the board's efforts.

● (1742)

Mr. Speaker, the very reason for the existence of the Canadian Wheat Board through legislation originated by the Conservatives in the 1930s and implemented by the Liberals in the 1940s is because of what private organizations were doing to grain producers then. They are doing the same thing now in feed grains. The Leader of the Opposition says we should allow private organizations to sell export grain, not just feed grain, in competition with the Canadian Wheat Board. Mr. Speaker, I am going to do everything I can to make sure that every grain producer in western Canada has a copy of that quotation.

In this parliament we should be dealing with the strengthening of orderly marketing and the removal of the private grain trade from the backs of the producers. If we want to do more for our economy and an important sector of the agricultural industry, we should deal with legislation to strengthen orderly marketing and provide a better two-price system. That was a good idea, and we supported it, but there has been no increase in the domestic price since the program was initiated. At least the price of grain produced for human consumption in Canada should be raised in order to offset the increased cost of production and the decreased income of farmers over the last year and a half.

This parliament should bring to an end some of the government's restraint programs. The official opposition demands more for one program that I would have put an end to yesterday if I could, and that is restraint in the Post Office department. In every city of Canada there are tens of thousands of homes that do not have mail delivery because of the restraint policies of the government. At the post office in Regina there is parking for about 20 cars, but they seem to expect 11,000 home owners to come there for their mail. We are told they cannot put boxes in the mud in the new housing areas, but at the same time they are spending nearly \$2 million