

across the 49th parallel. That is one of the short-term consequences of trying to have an economy that is controlled by Canadians for Canadians. Unfortunately, it was one of the consequences that the Liberal Government was not prepared to face and act against since its National Energy Program was only a type of milquetoast program anyway.

• (1710)

If the Government were really serious it would have been able to counteract that. Instead, it gave in, thanks to those Members, and now it does not have a National Energy Program to speak of.

**Mr. Mayer:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) pointed out that we have been inconsistent in our Crow policies. I would like to quote to him some statements made by former Premier Blakeney of Saskatchewan in January and ask him to explain those inconsistencies. On January 10, 1982, he said, "I think that the issues involved—" referring to the Crow, "... should be better known. I think that there are clearly, as I indicated, a number of issues involved. Perhaps a revision of the deal makes sense." He is referring to the Crow. In the January 1982 issue of *Business Life* he said, "But the perception of our Government really is that the farmers ought to keep the benefit of the Crow." Anybody following that would clearly know that he is leaving himself open to the possibility of some of the benefits being paid to the farmer. He went on to say, "If we want to address the issue of who is to pay the additional compensation to the railways, we are prepared to address that issue." Clearly he means that in his opinion he is willing to address the issue of having farmers pay more. That is not the Hon. Member's position now, as I understand it. Finally, Premier Blakeney said, "We make our one other narrow point in this discussion. It is very important to distinguish between the current level of the Crow and the principle of having a statutory rate," clearly indicating that he is willing to look at another statutory rate.

I would ask the Hon. Member if he can explain to me the difference between Premier Blakeney's position of a little over a year ago and what the Hon. Member just now enunciated as the NDP policy?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to accept the interpretation of the words of the former Premier of Saskatchewan given by the Hon. Member. He was talking about the benefits of the Crow, yes, the benefits that accrue to the grain producers of western Canada as a result of the Crow rate, the present statutory Crownest Pass rate. That is what we stand for and that is what former Premier Blakeney has made clear many times since those quotes, that he also stands for.

**Mr. Thacker:** Mr. Speaker, I have a final question for the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill. He made a vicious attack on the CPR, and that may be fair game. He talked about the money going to the CPR, leaking to shareholders and how it is ripping off people. In the face of those facts, why does his Party want \$651 million to go to the railways as

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compared to individual farmers, who could then choose to ignore CPR and perhaps market their grain through trucking or other means?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member labours under his belief of the marketplace, as if farmers who were given this money could spend it according to their individual will and somehow choose to send their grain along a CNR branch line when the only branch line along which they live is a CPR line. Could he explain how they could do that without getting into the business of trucking grain, which is exactly what we are against? We want grain to continue to be shipped on the railway. We do not think that the option of inland grain terminals and trucking is a long-term suitable option.

**Mr. Gustafson:** Mr. Speaker, I have no further questions but I would like to make a comment in response to the answer to my last question in which the Hon. Member said that the Conservatives were to blame for the high cost of fuel to farmers. I would like to put on the record that it was the NDP, crawling into bed with the Liberals, which has cost the farmers 66 cents a gallon for fuel.

**Mr. Thacker:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Anguish:** Are we beyond the question period?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** We are still in the period of questions, answers and comments.

**Mr. Anguish:** Mr. Speaker, in relation to the intervention by the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) concerning the speech of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie), let me point out who was in bed with whom. As of February 15, 1983, there were 276 recorded divisions in this Parliament. The Tories and the Liberals voted together 71 times until that point. The NDP and the Liberals voted together only 38 times.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** I do not make this comment this very often, but let me point out that the Standing Orders require comments of Hon. Members who wish to make interventions during the question period to be relevant to the speech made by the original Member. I would ask the Hon. Member to try to remain relevant to the speech made by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill.

**Mr. Anguish:** Mr. Speaker, I thought my remarks were at least as relevant as those of the Hon. Member for Assiniboia. I think I got my point across that the Conservatives and Liberals have been the same Party for many years and represent the same interests, and that we are the only Party who have stood steadfast for the Crow rate.

**Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on this first day of debate on Bill C-155 because it is perhaps the most important Bill to affect western Canada for many decades. It will do so for many decades into the future.

It is certainly an issue about which people can differ in their views. It shows once again the enormous differences we have in