

western NDP Members and Progressive Conservatives alike had had the openmindedness of the Minister, we could have defined the national interest and decided what is in the best interest of all Canadians and then tried to help and support the Minister in his quest for means to be taken to reach that objective. Then we could have explained our position to the people who had already made up their minds without quite knowing what the whole thing was all about. I am convinced that, at the meetings of the Quebec coalition where 400 or 500 people were gathered, seldom more than one or two of them had even read the Gilson report. I am convinced that if we could have met with each farmer—impossible, of course—they would have supported the Minister.

As a friend of Jack Horner's, I have met Alberta producers and I know as well a number of Saskatchewan farmers whom I have seen recently and whose needs I am aware of. I have been a Member for nine years now, and every spring and every summer I hear western Members talk about side tracks, what we in Quebec know as country lines. When Mr. Duplessis was Premier he won the elections by promising that those lines would be paved, whereas in Western Canada it seems that the way to win elections is to say that the side tracks will be maintained. I am not so sure. I discussed this issue with some farmers and I am not sure that it would be the most economical way to transport our foodstuffs. If we do not use the cheapest means, the result is that the farmer's net profit is lower. Our Minister of Transport has been trying to find ways so that everybody will be better off in the end. Finally, as it so often happens in Canada, the people took a tougher stand, thereby reducing the scope of the outstanding work which the Minister and the Department had undertaken.

In my opinion, we have a good policy and Bill C-155 is a tremendous step forward, but unfortunately the end result could have been even better, if their enthusiasm had not been curtailed for fear of reaching the acceptable limit of change. I know the concern of the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) who certainly looks after the interests of his constituents, and his reputation and potential extend beyond the limits of his riding. That is a friend of whom all Albertans can certainly be very proud.

I am convinced that deep down—it was not easy to deal with organizations with negative attitudes—the Hon. Member for Vegreville has great admiration for the current Minister of Transport, having been himself for nine months responsible for that portfolio, having looked closely into the problems associated with the transportation of Western grain but without enough time available to carry out the courageous reform implemented by this minister. I am sure he is full of admiration for him, and I wish my friend "Maz" as we call him on this side, had met the various organizations and said: Gentlemen, the plan can be improved in order to better serve your interest. Unfortunately, I know Hon. Members from the Official Opposition are very busy entering races and they did not have time to enter this particular improvement race. However, I hope that during the months and the years to

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come, the bill will offer us a golden opportunity to review this policy as a whole, around 1986, given the popularity of my Hon. friend from Alberta and I am convinced he will still be here in 1986 if he so wishes—

An Hon. Member: On the other side.

Mr. Loiselle: Yes, on the other side! And it is my hope that at that time we will be able to go all the way and achieve all the benefits we have in mind for the Canadian agriculture.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind Hon. Members of the remarkable personality of our Minister of Transport. It must be said again and again that he took into account the views of all the individuals he met, which is a rarity in politics, and especially he took into account our capacity to accept change. I can only hope that we will be able to go as far as he had hoped, in the best interest of all farmers in Quebec and in the West so that our agricultural industry will finally achieve its full potential.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Questions, comments? debate? The Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo).

• (1620)

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be in Parliament at this time and to take part in the debate on the transportation Bill as it relates to western farmers. I am pleased to be here because I am a product of the western farm. I grew up with the development and growth of western Canada.

I know that the Minister and others are amazed at the tenacity and energy with which farmers have opposed this Bill, this undermining of their trust in the country and a Government which they always thought did things for the benefit of the people. Those people trusted the Government because of the way they think. They have been betrayed before but they thought that most of the time the Government came up with something that was fair.

I know the Minister and others wonder why this issue has generated so much heat and emotion among farmers of the West. The Minister need only look at the history of the people to understand what they are fighting for. It goes far beyond cheap freight rates; they are fighting for a way of life which they built themselves.

Next Tuesday, May 17, in my community of Birch Hills the people will gather for a celebration. May 17 is Norwegian Independence Day. Some say it was the day that the Swedes got tired of the pesky Norwegians and kicked them out, but really it was a mutual decision between the Norwegians and the Swedes, reached through negotiation and understanding. That celebration is repeated in hundreds of communities in the West. Groups take time to celebrate and to remember. They might be Métis Swedes, Hungarians, Rumanians, Irish, English, Polish, Scottish, German or French, because in