

though it is in the national interest, even though it is in the interest of Canadian exports, even though it is in the interest of the grain producers, the railroads will not be ready, willing and able to enter into reciprocal arrangements and lose out on those guaranteed profits. You can bet on it, Mr. Speaker. Unless the railroads are required to enter into reciprocal arrangements, they will not do it. Even the voluntary arrangements that are in effect now will be in severe jeopardy.

If a railway comes to a rock slide in the mountains and it is figured that it will take only six or seven days to get the track cleared and back in shape, you will hear it said "To heck with it". Say it happened on a CN track. CN will say: "To heck with it; they will hold the grain for six or seven days until the rock slide is cleared up so we can move the grain over our lines and collect all the charges". That will be done instead of diverting the grain on to a CP line and getting the goods to Vancouver six days sooner.

My friend, the Hon. Member for Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight), said: "Well, the railroads are in this to make a buck and we do not object to that as long as you get the service". You can bet on it that they are in it to make a buck. If it means fouling up service for a few days in order for the railroad to clutch on to all the possible revenues itself, that is exactly what will happen. That is the responsibility and the mandate of the railway management.

The former Minister of Transport in 1974 wrote a letter to the board of directors and management of Canadian National instructing them to start making money. Ever since then we have been losing branch lines and service. That is the result of that so-called operating in a business like way—in business for Canada—which has been at the expense of too many Canadians.

We think this is a good amendment, Mr. Speaker. We hope the Government will agree that whoever is in authority, whether the Grain Transportation Administrator is an employee of the Wheat Board or not, he should have the authority, when the railroads will not agree voluntarily, to darn well make them. There should be no horsing around or appealing to the CTC or the Minister. They should be given two choices. If they will not do it voluntarily, give them two other choices—it is either compulsory or they have to do it. Then we will get even better results in the movement of grain in western Canada.

● (1230)

Mr. Len Gustafson (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, Motion No. 33 in the name of the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) deals with the duties and functions of the Administrator under Clause 17(d) which reads:

—promote reciprocal and other arrangements between the railway companies to facilitate the efficient and reliable movement of grain for the purpose of maximizing returns to producers.

The amendment would strike out line 6 at page 8 and substitute the following therefor:

"(d) promote, and shall require, if necessary, reciprocal and other arrange-".

Western Grain Transportation Act

This motion reinforces and strengthens the position of the Administrator to require from the railroads reciprocal agreements that would be in the best interests of the primary producers.

We have heard much in the last few days from Members of the New Democratic Party regarding their position, that they represent primary producers. They have gone to great lengths to try to discredit Conservatives in regard to the Canadian Wheat Board, the Wheat Pools in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and so on. Quite frankly, they have fallen very flat on that score.

As the Hon. Member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) said earlier, most Conservative Members, if not all, ran their campaigns on the basis of supporting a strong Canadian Wheat Board. I remember the ads in my 1979 campaign—"Len Gustafson works for western Canada and a strong Canadian Wheat Board". We have heard all the rhetoric of the last few days. We have finally got down to an amendment which carries with it some direction to the Bill and provides a strengthened position for primary producers. It would require some accountability on the part of the railroads as far as producers are concerned.

Last weekend the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party spoke very ably in Regina and Saskatoon. He brought out the importance of the ability of producers to pay. That deals with the whole area of protecting producers. If producers find themselves in a position where freight rate increases are unbearable and where railroads are not accountable to the Transportation Committee regarding costing and so on, we will find ourselves, as producers, in a very difficult position. This is what the whole Bill is about.

In dealing with this type of amendment, we must keep in mind that it certainly protects primary producers. There are more commodities moving on the railroads than grain. For example, we have coal, steel, automobiles, potash and a number of other commodities being transported on railroads. It is most important at this point, as the Hon. Member for Vegreville mentioned, that there be accountability and a requirement—"and shall require, if necessary, reciprocal and other arrangements"—for the purpose of maximizing returns to primary producers.

In closing, I want to say that we in the Progressive Conservative Party stand fast on defending primary producers, on accountability of railroads to them, and on a position which will strengthen their ability to produce grain and ship it.

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to comprehend why the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) is trying to bring in another amendment to subclause (d) when we already accepted two of his amendments in committee. We accepted the word "reliable"—"to facilitate the efficient and reliable movement of grain". We also accepted the words "for the purpose of maximizing returns to producers". I think we have a clause which meets the intent of the Bill. The Hon.