

Western Grain Transportation Act

through the 66 communities in my constituency, perhaps I could suggest to Hon. Members opposite that they take a block from their constituency, take a street from that particular block, and suck out \$220,600. From another block and another avenue they could suck out \$133,700. From a crescent they could suck out \$125,900. From a driveway they could suck out \$199,000. Take a short street, one that does not have quite as many people on it, and suck out \$95,500 from that particular street. I could go on endlessly. I could speak of the disproportionate impact upon the 66 communities. I could speak of the impact it would have in terms of destroying these areas. I make that illustration simply so that my friends opposite will understand that when I have presented these petitions from various people in my constituency I have not been speaking through my hat. I have been bringing forth the real concerns of real people, showing that this will have a real negative impact upon their livelihoods.

● (1850)

In contrast, consider what the railways are doing and what is happening in some of these areas. For example, let me refer to an article in the *New York Times* of May 16, 1983, wherein it is reported that the CNR is bailing out the Milwaukee Road Railway to the tune of \$250 million, and refers to the CP's proposal to bail out the Rock Island Railway to the tune of \$100 million. There have also been rumours that the CP might be putting in \$350 million to salvage the Illinois Central Gulf Railway. It is for this reason, Mr. Speaker—I will conclude.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member, but the time allotted for his speech has expired.

Mr. Prud'homme: More! Question!

Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, I hear the Members of the Government asking for the question. It is that very attitude which led the Hon. Member for Rosemont (Mr. Lachance) to stand today and, in a sort of specious way, move closure under Standing Order 56 which states:

The previous question, until it is decided, shall preclude all amendment of the main question, and it shall be in the following words, "That this question now be put".

The Hon. Member for Rosemont, who posed the motion today, virtually cut off all means by which the Opposition may have assisted the Government in improving a very bad Bill. It does not seem reasonable to us that a Bill as important to western Canada as the statutory rate for the movement of grain should be treated in this manner by a Government which is supposedly made up of democrats.

I found it strange to hear the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) speaking in the House just a few moments ago about the freedom of choice. I know that the Hon. Member does not hold a Canadian Wheat Board permit book. I am not too sure that he has ever held one, or that he understands how a permit book works. As a matter of fact, I

think there are only two Members of the NDP who do hold either an A or B Canadian Wheat Board permit book.

An Hon. Member: Is that a bad percentage?

Mr. McKnight: The Hon. Member for Regina West was asking that the Government subsidize the railroads. He said, "Please, taxpayers of Canada, subsidize the railroads. Please, farmers of Canada, subsidize the railroads". He did not want anything for the farmers, the grain producers. He wanted the Canadian Pacific Railroad to receive a subsidy from the taxpayers of Canada. After all the things I have heard the Hon. Member say about the bad Canadian Pacific, here he is begging and pleading in the House of Commons to the Government, asking for subsidies to the Canadian Pacific Railroad. I find that to be really strange. We will not go into the employment record of the Hon. Member. However, I would like the Hon. Member to understand that under his proposal, a sort of freight VIA Rail would be created, something which would cause the two railroads of Canada to continue to escalate their cost, shoving it at the grain farmers of Canada as an individual cost item. I heard the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) condemn that process at the VIA Rail hearings, and I will hear him condemn it tomorrow. However, today the Hon. Member for Regina West, a Member of the NDP, is requesting that the Government allow the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific Railroads to create the same increase and the same inflationary product there was with VIA Rail.

It is strange to discover who is criticized when the Party to my left gets into a problem. The Bill has been presented by a Liberal Government. The Progressive Conservatives are criticized, yet they are the only people who are carrying the debate, the only people who have maintained something of credibility in the eyes of the grain producers. They are trying to assist the Government and stop it from passing a bad Bill, and perhaps stop it from being completely wiped out forever in western Canada. I am not to sure that even we can do that.

The NDP proposed an amendment requesting a six month hoist. The vote was held the other night, but 35 per cent of its Members were not here to vote for their own amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. McKnight: Thirty-five per cent were not here to support a six month hoist. Even the Leader of their Party was not here to vote for the six month hoist. It makes one wonder whether they are just putting up a facade or whether they are really serious. They said they would fight the Bill to the end, that they would have nothing to do with the Bill. What did I hear the Hon. Member for Regina West ask? He moved a motion that Bill C-155 be referred to committee. I do not know what is happening over to my left. I notice that the Leader of the NDP is not there. I notice that his House Leader is absent. I just cannot understand the Hon. Member for Regina West who said, "We will fight the Bill. We will kill it. We will do everything we can". Yet at the first opportunity Members of the NDP had to vote on the six month hoist 35 per cent were