

will force the farmers to haul to inland terminals or pay higher freight rates to keep their local elevators open. If they are forced by this economic pressure to haul to inland terminals, the local elevator will close and, as recent studies have shown, the local community will decline very quickly after the local elevator has been shut down. This will have a serious negative impact on the nature and viability of rural life in small towns.

I implore Hon. Members to listen to these words. Mr. Phelps is pleading for the hundreds of small towns and villages in Saskatchewan, for a way of life. Surely neither the Conservative Party nor the Liberal Party believe it is socially desirable to only have three or four large communities in Saskatchewan with no viable small towns and villages throughout that Province. Surely Hon. Members of both these Parties do not believe that the good life is just in the large urban centres. These Hon. Members cannot ignore the study which was filed with the Committee by Randy Passmore of the Planning and Research Branch, Saskatchewan Department of Municipal Affairs, and prepared in May of 1982. The study is called "The Impact of Increased Grain Movement on Rural Roads". It is a fascinating study which goes into specific detail about the impact of road costs on various districts if abandonment occurs. For the record, I would like to read his general statement in the opening paragraph:

A 50 per cent increase in grain truck traffic on the rural road system over the next five years could mean an additional 5.6 per cent per year in incremental maintenance and reconstruction costs, or roughly \$3.4 million per year in 1981 dollars. Rail line abandonment will amplify the effects of increased grain handling. Limited abandonment could add another \$1.8 million per year to maintenance and reconstruction costs. In some areas this may be great enough to warrant special consideration—including the possible reconstruction to pavement standard of a portion of the Primary Grid system. If the Crow rate is changed in such a way that it results in an inland terminal system, the cost of municipal and provincial road maintenance could reach \$150 million per year (in 1981 dollars).

This study is predicting major increases in costs to the Province of Saskatchewan and to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan if there is large-scale trucking and the abandonment of branch line systems. Who will bear those costs? The taxpayers of Saskatchewan. What is occurring, Mr. Speaker, is a transfer of costs from the railroads to the public of Saskatchewan. This is unfair. It is unfair that the federal Government, through this legislation, should pass that cost on the Province of Saskatchewan and to the provincial taxpayers.

I am surprised that the Official Opposition is in fact encouraging this. That is a Party which has stood on many occasions for the interests of our western provinces. Yet with this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, it is opening the door for the transfer of costs to the Province and its taxpayers. I am surprised that Hon. Members of the Conservative Party who represent Saskatchewan are not on their feet opposing the original piece of legislation with respect to trucking. In fact, they were responsible for the amendment which allows for trucking to be introduced. I am surprised they did not consult with their provincial colleagues in Saskatchewan and were not warned by the Department of Municipal Affairs as to what it would mean to the taxpayers of that Province, and I am surprised they have indicated to the House that they will be opposing our amendment. I implore them to reconsider, Mr. Speaker. I can understand that Hon. Members from

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Alberta, where the population is not as dispersed as it is in Saskatchewan might not understand how important it is for Saskatchewan to maintain the railroad system.

In conclusion, I plead with Hon. Members of the Conservative Party to reconsider their stand, particularly on Motion No. 35, and I hope that they will join with us in voting for it.

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few comments on Motion No. 35 which we are debating this afternoon. I support the motion which basically protects the branch lines going into many of the small delivery points we have throughout western Canada. Without this amendment some trucking firms, specifically Canadian Pacific Transport, could force the closure of a number of branch lines in the constituency I represent, as well as throughout western Canada, especially small delivery points. I say there can be a conflict of interest there, Mr. Speaker, and it is developing now and could come about if we do not accept Motion No. 35. Just this past week Canadian Pacific Transport announced it is purchasing four trucking companies in the Province of Saskatchewan: Lays Transport of Meadow Lake, North Central Expressways of Saskatoon, Swift Current Freight Lines Ltd. and Kissner Transport Ltd. of Regina. It makes me wonder why all of a sudden CP Transport is purchasing small and medium-sized independent trucking companies in Saskatchewan. I place no blame on the trucking companies which have sold out. It shows the good management and enterprising spirit with which they built up those trucking companies over the years, and they now have the opportunity to sell, hopefully, for a profit on their investment. But I believe CP is buying these trucking companies in anticipation of Bill C-155 passing, which would provide not only their rail lines with a guaranteed annual income but also their trucking division as well.

• (1600)

My fear, Mr. Speaker, is that if this amendment is not passed, wherever CP has a branch line and they see they can maximize their profit by taking grain out by truck instead of rail, they will surely bring grain out by truck and allow some of those branch lines to die. Their argument would be that the grain is not going out over the rails so there is no need for the rails to be in place because the main reason for the rail was the movement of grain. However, if the Administrator, who is responsible to the Cabinet, enters into an arrangement with CP to truck grain out from that delivery point, they have a conflict of interest because they are not doing it in the interest of that branch line but in the interests of maximizing their profits. I suppose that is a good business deal for CP but it is not a very good deal, socially or economically, for the people who live in the communities serviced by those branch lines.

With that conflict of interest which could, and I expect will, exist there, we will find that some branch lines have to suffer to the benefit of none other than Canadian Pacific. Previous speakers in this debate have mentioned that with the removal of a branch line the delivery point would die altogether. There would be no real need for the elevator if the branch line is