

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I do that workers will be vulnerable with this. How can a woman with confidence go forward and complain about sexual harassment? Can one envisage an employer saying to his employees: "Things are tough. The wages are going to be cut back and if you don't like it you know what awaits you". Can one imagine that? I can.

[Translation]

This is not a step forward: it is a step backward, a giant step backward.

[English]

I find it deplorable that this House may indeed go forward and endorse this particular piece of legislation.

[Translation]

As I said earlier, and I will repeat it, I find it deplorable.

[English]

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, there have been about eight or nine speakers this afternoon on this bill. The two major aspects of this bill are UI and the Western Grain Transportation Act. All of the speeches have been on UI and I have five minutes left on the Western Grain Transportation Act.

The government proposes with its so-called restraint to take \$74 million away from the amount it pays to the railroads under the WGTA, which means that the grain producers will have to pay it. The grain producers in western Canada will have to pay it and their wheat prices are down to \$110 a tonne on export grain.

Instead of the government giving \$729 million under the WGTA it gave \$653 million. Out of that \$653 million, it will propose paying that to the farmers, instead of to the railroads, but it will be less rail line related costs, remaining subsidies to the railroads, adjustment funds and any funds associated with pooling charges. Even then, the farmers will not get the amount of money that the government is cutting from the WGTA.

The National Transportation Agency Review Commission did a report. Here it is. It was done by Mr. Gilles Rivard. It is garbage. He is the new guy who is going to

be the head of the National Transportation Agency. If there was ever a case of putting a coyote in charge of the chicken coop, this is a dandy.

The government has been paying \$28 per tonne to the railroads and paying the grain producers \$14 per tonne. The government proposes to cut its share. It means that the producers will now be paying more than three times as much for freight costs as they did in 1984. The Tories who were in opposition in 1984 fought the Liberals, as well as myself and my colleagues, by opposing this legislation and today they are doing exactly the same thing. They are adding insult to injury. In their errors of omission and commission they have compounded what the Liberals did.

We are losing farmers by the thousands who are losing their land that has been in their families for three or four generations. This government's solution for them is to make them pay another \$74 million share of the cost of moving grain.

Consider what the Canadian Pacific Railway got from the people of Canada: 25 million acres, \$25 million and coal lands as the result of the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement. The government allowed the railway to siphon those off into separate companies. It should be making the CPR take some of the profits that the CPR got from the lands, forests and coal fields that we the people gave them and make them pay their own damn costs of moving grain to live up to the agreement of 1897.

I do not understand why the Conservative government that opposed this in the first place back in 1983-84 are now doing exactly what the Liberals did.

Mr. Duhamel: Not so.

Mr. Benjamin: Yes it is. Compare the speeches of Tories in those years in opposition with what they are doing now. The Liberals abolished the Crows Nest Pass Agreement and it is a different story now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 6.45 o'clock p.m., pursuant to an order made Tuesday, March 23, 1993 and in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.