

Western Grain Transportation Act

selves to the critically important areas dealt with in Bill C-155, the Conservatives have chosen to deal with the window dressing with this amendment. That is what they mean when they talk about their responsible approach to the legislation. In fact, the irresponsibility of their approach is shown when you look at this amendment.

The responsible approach, I submit, is shown by the New Democratic Party which has stood firm, united, and consistent for the interests of their constituents and for the country as a whole. Its stand is basically change in the Crow rate—three-year option, no flim-flam as in this amendment. The thrust of all our amendments has been basically to eliminate changes to the Crow rate.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that serious people should not focus on the irrelevant. People who have something to hide often do. We should not be diverted by this rather trivial Tory amendment. Whether you vote for it or not is really fairly irrelevant. We should get it over and get on to some of the more important NDP amendments which deal with the real guts of this issue, namely, how we are going to preserve the culture, the historic rights in Confederation of the western farmer, and how we really are going to bring the railways, including the CPR, in tow and force them to upgrade rail lines while keeping the viability of the prairie farmer through the existing Crow rate.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, we have certainly heard from the joker from Vancouver-Kingsway. What a joke. It was hilarious to listen to that exposé. It is an embarrassment to his colleagues, and it is an embarrassment for anyone to be sitting in this House listening to the comments just advanced by the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway. He is suggesting that everything that needs to be contained in this Bill to protect the farmers and the grain producers is contained in Section 262 of the National Transportation Act. I think everyone knows that Section 262 of the Act has not been adequate and sufficient to date. It is certainly not improved with the passage of this Bill.

If the Member can show me in any one instance where the Act signifies the interest of the grain producer, or even mentions the word grain, then perhaps I would at least partially share some of comments he has made. But for him to suggest that this amendment is trivial, that it is nothing but fluff and has no substance, clearly shows up the lack of knowledge which this Member has about this Bill, or the lack of his knowledge about the history that producers and groups have experienced when dealing with Section 262.

● (0315)

Perhaps it all goes to show that this particular Hon. Member was handed a speech prepared by his researchers. He read it into the record. His knowledge would have certainly been served far better if he had engaged and participated in some of the committee meetings during the course of last summer. I know that the Hon. Member appeared before the committee hearing in Vancouver. He stayed for a short period of time, made an intervention, and left. That was the sum and

substance of his interest in Bill C-155, yet he rose tonight and promenade as the great defender and great saviour of western Canadian grain producers.

I compliment the Hon. Member for Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight) on his comprehensive and thorough amendment. Yes, it was patterned after Section 262, but it is strengthened in many areas and is tailored specifically to grain. That is the important part, and that is the point which the rookie from Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) overlooked. Furthermore, it is consistent with our commitment to improve the Bill in terms of its relationship with producers.

The Hon. Member for Kindersley-Lloydminster just handed me a quotation from which I would like to read. At page 93 of the committee proceedings, No. 132, the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) is quoted as saying:

Mr. Chairman, as one who has had two bitter experiences in trying to get the CTC to act under Section 262, in the case of several farmers who tried to act under the provisions of Section 262, those farmers were turned down because they were not called a shipper. The courts turned them down because they were not classified as a shipper. It was a board grain.

We certainly addressed that matter in the course of the committee proceedings by defining a shipper. He went on to say:

Now, if the GTA is not a shipper, he can complain all he likes to the CTC and he can go to court: he is not a shipper, he is out of court. I tried it with grain cars, I tried it with livestock cars, and all the CTC did was respond to me, after the railroads and I went back and forth two or three times each, that the railroads were making a reasonable effort to provide suitable accommodation for traffic offered under Section 262.

In the words of the Hon. Member for Regina West, Section 262 is not adequate. The Hon. Member for Regina West, the "Lone Ranger" who sat through the committee proceedings, has a fair knowledge of the contents of the Bill and of transportation in general. Certainly we may disagree on a number of approaches to transportation, but I would never suggest for a minute that the Hon. Member does not understand transportation. However, I would suggest that the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway should spend some time with the Hon. Member for Regina West and learn a little about transportation. Then he could contribute in a much more positive manner to this debate.

As I indicated, this particular comprehensive motion goes a long way toward strengthening the accountability of the railroads in terms of what they will be called upon and expected to do in the area of providing service. Quite frankly, it charges the railway, under a legal obligation, to provide adequate service and adequate accommodation to move grain. As I said earlier, the motion is designed to incorporate grain and to incorporate grain producers.

In dealing with this Bill, and from the various exchanges which have taken place, we know that the railways are indeed obtaining a sweetheart deal. They will be receiving well over \$1 billion per year for the movement of grain. During the course of committee proceedings the impression was left with us that the railways did not think that that amount was enough. As a matter of fact they are still complaining, notwithstanding the fact that the Government has been very