

represent them. I will always stand in my place to support legitimate amendments to improve the efficiency of the system so that western Canadian producers obtain a better deal. That is what this amendment is attempting to do and why we as Members of Parliament ought to support it.

Before the Parliamentary Secretary became confused about whether he was making a motion or seeking unanimous consent, he rose in his place to say that there were certain amendments in committee which would have changed the clause. He indicated that they supported their amendment which they thought was sufficient. Amendments were put forward in committee by Members of the Progressive Conservative Party and of the New Democratic Party. We feel that the amendment before us today is necessary. It must be absolutely clear that the functions of one agency cannot interfere with those of another. That is all this section of the act is attempting to clarify. If we have an unclear Act, we can have a bureaucracy or agency that gets carried away with itself in the interpretation of the wording of a section.

I commend the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) for bringing forward the amendment. It is worthy of support. We ought to get on with doing just that.

Mr. Terry Sargeant (Selkirk-Interlake): Mr. Speaker, indeed it is a pleasure once again to have an opportunity to speak on a motion to amend the terrible piece of legislation we are debating, Bill C-155. It is as obvious to me as it is to others in the House that we are moving through amendments today at a rather rapid rate. This was pointed out by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Flis) in his somewhat confusing contribution. I agree with the Hon. Member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Clark) that many of us were confused by what was going on for a little while, notably by the comments of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

I am sure the Government is happy about the rather rapid progress in dealing with the amendments today because the sooner the House finishes with these amendments, the sooner the Government will get down to scrapping the Crow. The sooner the amendments pass through the House, the sooner the Government can throw thousands of prairie farmers off the land by increasing transportation costs some 400 per cent.

Probably the Tories are also very happy about the rapid progress in dealing with the amendments today. Over the last few weeks we have heard them spilling crocodile tears about the dreadful impact of higher freight rates on prairie farmers. How serious are they about saving the Crow? Just a few weeks ago the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) came into the debate as a shining new convert to the "save the Crow" position. He said that farmers cannot afford to pay increased freight rates and that the Government should postpone its plan to kill the Crow for three years to let the income position of farmers improve. I read a while ago in the *Western Producer* that the Hon. Member has now scrapped in three-year moratorium notion. I suppose that can only mean he is back onside with the Government, supporting an end to the Crow rate. One can only guess.

Western Grain Transportation Act

Also a few days ago I read in *The Globe and Mail* a report on the Crow debate. I indicated that the hopes of some unnamed Tory insiders was that the Government would hurry up and bring in time allocation, to get their Tory friends off the hook, I suppose. Indeed, we may have some scheming going on now which will come up with yet another unholy alliance of Grits and Tories to screw prairie farmers.

Mr. McDermid: Shame.

Mr. Epp: Order.

Mr. Forrestall: You will become just another pretty face from the Prairies.

Mr. Sargeant: I suppose we have to feel some sympathy for the Tories. The reported position of their Leader is only that he wants a united Tory position on the Crow. That does not give us too much to chew on. However, I think it is prairie Tory Members for whom we have to feel the most sympathy. When they went home this summer they discovered that indeed the Crow rate was very important to grain producers. More than that, it is very important to the whole prairie economy. Our prairie Tory colleagues found out that they had better be seen to be defending the Crow when they come back here.

An Hon. Member: Not really defending it.

Mr. Sargeant: Exactly. They have made much of their new faith in the Crow rate. The Government has clearly come to believe, with reason, that the Tories are willing to deal the Crow away. That should not surprise any of us. It should not be a surprise, especially when we consider the rather poor record of the Tories in fielding speakers for this debate. They have about three times as many Members as us, which gives them the right to three times as many speakers. The best they can do so far is one for one with Members of this Party. Their defence of the Crow has been a paper tiger. I can only hope that farmers in their ridings will come to realize this before it is too late.

The amendments we are discussing at present, Motion No. 39 of the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) and Motion No. 40 of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), are both important, although obviously one is better than the other. They both strive to protect the authority of the Canadian Wheat Board from the broad powers this Bill would give to the Senior Grain Transportation Committee and its Administrator. Of the two, Motion No. 40 is clearly the better. It is most in keeping with the concerns raised by the Wheat Board Chief Commissioner, Esmond Jarvis, when he appeared before the Committee on Transport this summer. For that reason, it is Motion No. 40 that we should accept.

● (1750)

Why is that? The wording of the two motions is very similar. The difference is that the amendment proposed by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), specifically mentions that the duties and functions of the