

Western Grain Transportation Act

Mazankowski), pointed out. It might have been drafted by the same people who brought down the Income Tax Act.

Mr. Rossi: Have you read it?

Mr. Paproski: We think it is wrong to impose higher costs on the agricultural community just when farm community prices are declining and farm input costs are increasing.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that because of the interjections you will give me a little more time. I will feel neglected if I am to be cut off.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Paproski: The Bill would discourage diversification and further processing of agricultural production in western Canada. There is no provision in the Bill to reduce rates if costs should fall. It is the same trap as the energy agreement. The Bill concentrates power in the hands of the Minister, the Minister sitting opposite, that heartless Minister, the Minister who does not care.

Mr. Smith: He's a nice guy.

Mr. Paproski: There will be no railroad performance guarantees for the first three years. For three years, the railroads will get a free ride.

The Government should consider the context in which it is attempting to rush through such a complex and flawed piece of legislation. First, it must understand what the transportation system represents in the West. The Crow rate is the heart of the West. Someone said it is the Magna Carta of the West. If the Government takes that away, it might as well take away the second language, the official language. If that is done, that is exactly what it will represent. The gentlemen opposite from Quebec understand. They want to be "*bilingue*"; we want the Crow rate in the West.

Mr. Rossi: Talk to Stewart, from Simcoe South, about "*bilingue*".

Mr. Paproski: It is not just a method of moving goods and people. It is not just a double line steel or a length of asphalt traversing the prairie. The railroad, the highway and the river—these are frequently the reasons many of these towns exist. They determine the location, activity and well-being of the towns and villages. They represent a means of communication and the lifeline for the provision of goods and services and commerce. If the Government destroys those transportation networks, it destroys the towns and villages which make up much of western Canada.

Second, the Government must understand what a critical time this is for farmers. The amount of bankruptcies and the high costs are unbelievable. We are feeling the pinch there right now that Hon. Members opposite felt right here about a year and a half ago. The Government must understand what a critical time this is for farmers. I said that, and I repeat, repeat and repeat: please do something for them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order.

Mr. Paproski: Their costs have escalated rapidly in the past few years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member. The Chair did extend further time to the Hon. Member for the interruptions.

Some Hon. Members: Continue.

Mr. Paproski: May I?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Is there unanimous consent to allow the Hon. Member to continue his remarks?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): It is agreed.

Mr. Smith: No, no.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): There is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Paproski: David Smith, you will regret it.

Mr. Smith: We want to get this Bill through.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have been delaying my remarks on this part of the debate, waiting for the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), who is a spokesman for a very important part of this policy change—

Mr. Paproski: Don't hold your breath.

Mr. Althouse: —to make his speech. However, when he did deign to stand in his place in this House, all he could do was introduce time limitation under Standing Order 82. This is a very important debate for all of the Canadian people, not only those in western Canada. A great many aspects can be and must be addressed. That is why we have put forward the amendment which we are now discussing to delay the subject matter being introduced in the House for another six months, so that people may have adequate time to analyse, assess and debate what is proposed here.

Today I will deal only with the aspects of the proposal involving agriculture, because it seems that what we have here is a very consistent move, which has been often demonstrated by the Minister of Agriculture and some of his predecessors, of attempting to create economic activity in Canada by making some farm investment redundant in order that new farm investment can be created in another region or agricultural sector. That is basically what is being proposed here, a proposal to change the economics of a production base in one part of the country, with the hope that another sector will gain an advantage and there will be some economic activity created from that advantage.

We saw this kind of activity ten or 15 years ago when the feed grain policy changed. The effect was to sell domestic feed grains at a lower price than the Wheat Board was charging users. The net result was a vast shift in feeding of livestock, particularly pork, from west to east.