

Western Grain Transportation Act

The Canadian Wheat Board is the organization which has been set up by prairie farmers to be an agency which will protect, guide and direct the sale of grain from the moment it is collected at a certain point and shipped to the port at the time when it will be available to sell to a certain part of the world which needs that grain at that particular time. It is a long, complicated, intricate problem which has to be solved if the economy of western Canada is to continue to grow. That is why our amendment, Motion No. 55, which will be spoken about now, insists upon the fact that the Canadian Wheat Board shall administer and control the railroad cars, whether they be leased or owned.

● (2340)

I appreciate the fact that the former Minister of Transport would have liked to have had that power in his hands. That Minister of Transport and I were actually engaged in an election together and I know him quite well. The present Minister of Transport will, I believe, unfortunately meet the same fate as the Minister of Transport of whom I have spoken, the one I had the privilege to run against during an election. Probably one of the Hon. Members in the front row, the Hon. Member for Saskatoon West (Mr. Hnatyshyn), or the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) who plans to be the next Minister of Transport if that happens to be the fate of the country, will meet the same fate. On the Prairies, it is a very difficult and dangerous job to be the Minister of Transport and move the grain that makes the economy of that part of the world operate.

Again, I would say very clearly and specifically that the reason the Hon. Member for Regina West has proposed Motion No. 5 is that it clearly indicates that the Minister will not be taking over the control but that the control will be administered by the Canadian Wheat Board as it is now, so that we can be certain that those cars are in the right place at the right time because the people who want to move the grain at that particular time to the markets are calling for it.

Motion No. 56, also proposed by the Hon. Member for Regina West, is intended for the purpose of protecting the administration and the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board. The reason again, very simply put, is that this is the key to the whole system. The key to the system is who is in charge of the cars when they are needed and where they will be going with the product that is needed at port at that particular time.

I would just like to go on record, Mr. Speaker, along with my Party, as asking the Government and my colleagues on the Conservative side to support us in Motion No. 55 and Motion No. 56. We would like to make the point clearly and precisely that we want the control of cars to remain with the Wheat Board and not be transferred into the hands of the Minister. That transfer would create a whole new infrastructure of power and a whole new bureaucracy necessary to administer and control the system. As far as we are concerned, it would upset a system that is working properly at this time and should not be interfered with.

There will be plenty of problems down the road with this new Bill that is being pushed through the House. There will be plenty of difficulties, plenty of questions and plenty of regulations to be looked at without tampering with one that is so necessary and so much at the core of the matter as is the control of the transportation system and the cars. That control should remain with the Wheat Board. So, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for being allowed the opportunity to address this subject.

[Translation]

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my friend from Saskatchewan spoke this evening about the movement of grain. Mr. Speaker, the movement of grain is the core for our Canadian Prairies. It is very important to the life of people in Western Canada. The Member for Saskatoon-East (Mr. Ogle) spoke from experience and he spoke with a passion for the West; he knows Western Canada and we should listen to what he said.

Motion No. 55 is an amendment aimed at making a Bill more like the kind of legislation we are in favour of. We in the New Democratic Party are opposed to any changes in the Crow rate because that would mark the end of farmers in Western Canada. My colleagues from Manitoba and Saskatchewan have told me that farmers can not afford the new rate. Now I realize that Quebecers understand the need to preserve a culture. That is the problem here. We must preserve and conserve the culture of Western Canada.

I want to ask one question. Is it right for an anglophone Government to change the culture and life of the Province of Quebec without representation from Quebec? Here, the same thing is happening. A Government in Eastern Canada is proposing to change the culture of the West without any support from the people of Western Canada. I say it is not right. This evening, we of the New Democratic Party are proposing amendments. On this Bill, the Progressive Conservative Party on my right is not taking a strong position, no more than it has on any other issues in the House. It has no position at all on the Crow. We in the New Democratic Party said that the Crow must not change if we are to preserve the culture of Western Canada. And although I may not be very articulate in French, I must speak a few words of French to explain to Quebecers why this is so important to us in Western Canada. We hope that this amendment will help farmers in Western Canada. In it we are proposing that present system for moving grain, remain unchanged.

[English]

Let me conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I tried to say as best I can in French that this in fact is a Government of the East without representation from the West that is making a fundamental change in the culture of the west. I do acknowledge that there is one Member over there who is from the West. I have a great deal of trouble understanding why in fact