

What our motion would do is put that information in the hands of those who need it to analyse whether the railways are performing the service and meeting the requirements under the law and that they are doing it under a financial structure which they say they need.

There is another matter on the Prairies that is difficult to analyse. During the past year when commodity transportation volume was down because of the recession, we had record grain movements. The railways always argue that they lose money on that so the financial picture is interesting for this year when they moved more grain and less of other commodities.

The Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) has been arguing that the amount of money that would go to the railways, which the NDP say should go totally to the railways, is greater than the railways have shown they need to maintain the railways, improve the system or the so-called short haul movement of grain. That is what these amendments would do.

By an ill-drafted amendment, the NDP is willing to increase the amount that farmers pay for the movement of grain by 20 per cent. They are ready to destroy the Crow, no matter what they say. On the other hand, this Party's amendment would result, without question, in the railways not only being forced to allow us to monitor their performance but also to monitor their actual expenses.

I say to all Members of the House, please do not kill the Crow as the NDP wants, but support the amendments that make sense across the Prairies, the amendments moved by this Party.

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a few comments on the record regarding Motions No. 50, No. 52 and No. 53. I was very surprised to hear some of the arguments of the Conservatives to the effect that we want to kill the Crow. I can say unequivocally that the NDP has always stood for maintaining the statutory rate by which western producers move their grain.

I am particularly surprised at the Hon. Member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger). I know him quite well and I have sat on committees with him. He is a member of the special committee set up to study Indian self-government and I have found him to be very conscientious in the work he has done on that committee. His comments on Bill C-155 surprised me when he maintained that the NDP would do away with the statutory Crow rate because we want the payments to go to the railways from the Government instead of the producers. The argument is that if the payments go to the producers, then the producers cannot put leverage on the railway companies for better movement of grain in western Canada.

This is something like the old story that Tommy Douglas used to tell about the elephant doing the dance among the chickens, Mr. Speaker. How could the farmers put pressure on the railway companies for the better movement of grain? Farmers do not have the means to pressure the railway companies that the Government has.

Western Grain Transportation Act

I could use a little parable about Members of Parliament putting pressure on the Government compared to farmers putting pressure on the railway companies for better movement of their produce. In the general election of February, 1980, not one Member of Parliament ran as an independent and was elected. If people are serious about getting elected and feel that they want to do something for their country, they would not run on their own but under the banner of a political Party. That is because there is strength in numbers, Mr. Speaker, in standing for policies, which most Parties should have.

However, it is becoming obvious this evening that there are no policies of the Conservative Party in regard to Bill C-155 because it keeps changing its stand on the statutory rate in Bill C-155 whenever it feels it convenient to do so in its best political patronage interest across this country. That Party finds itself slipping seven points in the Gallup poll and all of a sudden it becomes paranoid. It calls through petitions for the country to go to an election because that Party knows that if it goes on much longer it will not have the public support even to form a Government in this country.

● (1930)

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Anguish: I believe that scares those Hon. Members somewhat. I can hear their nervous laughter over there. The Official Opposition and other Hon. Members of this House of Commons must make sure that the Government, whether it be Liberal, Conservative or NDP, protects the best interests of the producers in Canada. I want to dispel the argument that Conservatives are using here this evening that the New Democratic Party is opposed to the statutory Crow rate. We have unequivocally always maintained that the Crow rate is the right of the producers in western Canada and nothing that the Tories can say will detract from that so far as anyone who has followed this issue for any period of time is concerned.

The first amendment, Motion No. 50, which we are dealing with here, is a New Democratic Party amendment. It requires the railroads to reinvest any surplus funds received from public moneys paid to them under this legislation. Why would we want them to do that? I feel there are some very good reasons, Mr. Speaker. If one looks at the history of the rail companies in this country, particularly Canadian Pacific, one will see that Canadian Pacific received over the period of time since it has been in existence some 43,962,546 acres of land. It has also received hundreds of millions of dollars to invest in the transportation system of this country, not only to haul grain, not only to haul manufactured products from other areas of the country, but also to tie the country together. It was part of the Confederation agreement. I do not care how many times Hon. Members of this House hear that. It was part of the Confederation agreement to hold this country together.

It is especially important for the people of western Canada who wanted that link with the great country of Canada as opposed to joining the United States of America. It worked,