

Western Grain Transportation Act

implement dealerships in those communities, the people who would face at best a very uncertain future.

Many people in this House grew up in small or rural communities and recognize that there is a legitimate social benefit derived from life in those communities. When the Liberal Government introduces legislation which attacks that way of life, it is attacking more than the pocketbooks of these people. It is attacking their values. They live in those communities because they want to be independent. They want to have control over their own educational system, to know their neighbours, and to work on the farms of their ancestors, their fathers and mothers. That will not be possible with the legislation, because it will promote the big communities. It will promote transportation of grain from Regina to Saskatoon. However, it will hurt the small communities. It will mean that every small community which has an elevator will see that elevator being closed. Since the grain will be taken to the larger centres by truck anyway, it will mean that one might as well do one's purchasing there. Therefore, the stores in small communities will close.

If one is to be travelling back and forth, why should one even live on one's farm anymore? Why should one not live in the big community and simply commute to the farm? That may sound like a pipedream or something which would never happen, but if one considers the entire history of the depopulation of rural areas in Canada, one will know that that is what has been happening for the last 50 years in Canada, and that this legislation will only accelerate the process. If an economic tool which helps rural communities is taken away, in the long run those rural communities themselves will be taken away. That is the concern of this Party.

As the Hon. Member for Churchill, I have other concerns as well. I mentioned earlier that by introducing variable rates grain will not go to the Port of Churchill. That means that the Port will eventually be closed down. That may be satisfactory to some Members of the Liberal Party, and certainly to some Members of the Conservative Party, but it would not be a happy occasion for the people who live in the town of Churchill who work at the port or in the tourist industry there. Most of the people who come up to Churchill to see the port, the whales and the polar bears arrive by train. Obviously, those trains will not exist if grain is going elsewhere. Therefore, by taking away the grain shipments, not only will the economic industry be killed, but the economic industry of tourism in that community will die as well.

As a result of this legislation, the communities in my riding where people work on the rail line, such as those in Wabowden, Gillam and The Pas, will fold or fade.

I ask the Liberal majority in the House to consider what the passage of this legislation will do, not only to the Churchill constituency, the Port of Churchill and other communities which will be affected, but also to the many other rural communities. I also ask the Liberals to look at what will happen to the larger communities in western Canada. As the Government takes more dollars from the pockets of the farmers in western Canada, it is taking money from the urban residents of western Canada. The \$6,000 more which the

average farmer will be paying to the rail lines is money which will not be spent in stores in the cities of western Canada. It is money which will, for the most part, leave western Canada and never return. It is money which will go into the pocketbooks of the railways, but never into the economy of western Canada.

In an even more general area, I would like to point out that it is money which will never be spent in Canada at all. This will hurt not only the industrial towns where farm implements are built, where people are involved in the manufacturing industry. As money is taken from the pockets of farmers and small businessmen in rural Canada, as it is taken from the western economy, it is being taken from the entire Canadian economy as well. It is costing jobs in Churchill, The Pas, Humboldt, Yorkton and Melville. Money is also being taken from Regina, Winnipeg, Hamilton and all parts of the Canadian economy.

This legislation is very important. I, for one, am upset that the Government has moved the previous question to cut off debate, to cut off any chance to convince Hon. Members opposite who, by and large, are ignorant of western Canada. I mean that as no insult, but let us face the fact that the Government has only two Members from western Canada.

• (1840)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Hon. Member will be aware that I have signalled him a couple of times that he should try to complete his remarks. If he has a remaining sentence, he may wish to finish.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I certainly will not ask for unanimous consent to continue because the very nature of this Bill is to cut off debate. In closing, I would say that this legislation is much more important than the Government realizes. It is much more significant and I would hope that the Government would reconsider its actions and allow more debate, and perhaps educate themselves on the effects of this Bill.

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, in the ten minutes available to me I want to concentrate not only on the effects of the Bill but on what significance it might have if it was changed in certain ways that have been proposed by our Party, specifically by the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), in order to enhance transportation across Canada and specifically develop diversification in western Canada.

In order to do that I went back to two debates. The first was the debate of 1881 on the original Bill that formalized the agreement between the John A. Macdonald Government of the day and the CPR for the building of the railroad. I have been somewhat disturbed during this debate by the fact that the NDP have been railing against the CPR or against the railways as if everything they have done is wrong. If one reads the debates it can be seen that the purpose of the legislation was to create a transportation system which would bind the colonies together. That was the purpose and surely none of those