

CNR and Air Canada

an additional movement of 75 million bushels of grain per year.

The government, and through it the Canadian people, owns inland terminals on the Prairies. I point out that there is a terminal in Saskatoon which until recently was not used to any great extent. It can hold approximately five million bushels of grain. There is no reason why the railways cannot move grain into such terminals, keep them filled with a variety of grain, clean the grain in the terminals and load it into hopper bottomed cars for movement to a waiting vessel at the coast. This could mean a little more stress on our communications system to co-ordinate the arrival of trains and boats. But this is done for other commodities; it is done with respect to the movement of potash and there is no reason why it could not be done with respect to the movement of grain.

Rail travel, as is well known, has suffered at times from snowslides and other problems. These are not the fault of the farmer, of the government, of the railways or the railway employees. Snowslides are a problem that must be tackled with a long-range approach, adopting the four suggestions that I have put forward. We should utilize our railway system more fully so that temporary snowslides do not bring about a similar situation.

Recently, for the first time in many years, Japan tendered for grain in Canada but we could not offer grain because we thought we could not fill the order on time. This shows how serious is the present situation. The minister responsible for the Wheat Board has reported that for the time being we have stopped accepting tenders for grain sales. I believe the situation will not get any better unless worth while planning is undertaken and implemented.

We cannot expect the farmers to continue to bear the cost of government mistakes in policies. There is no justification in having the farmers pay, either directly or indirectly, \$3,000 to \$6,000 per day in demurrage charges for a ship waiting outside the port of Vancouver. The Wheat Board, I know, ultimately pays the demurrage charges but in the last analysis the farmers may lose their final grain payments. Some people in the grain trade believe that in a crisis situation such as we are experiencing we could use the Burlington Northern railroad which could transport grain through southern Montana out to the coast at Vancouver without encountering all the trouble the CN and CP meet running through the mountains to Vancouver. This is something that should be examined.

To summarize, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a serious problem but it is only a small part of our transportation difficulties. Other hon. members have mentioned the discrepancies in freight assistance and have pointed out how regional disparities are encouraged by railway policies. In the present circumstance a concerted effort is necessary on the part of the government, the railways, the train companies, the people at the terminal positions and the farmers to reach a satisfactory solution. If we are to talk in terms of a billion bushels of grain per year, these problems have to be tackled and solved.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I heartily support the idea of giving this bill a six months' hoist. As the member representing the constituency of

[Mr. Murta.]

Saskatoon-Biggar I am not prepared to see this bill pass until the government gives some adequate answers on transportation. Such answers have not been given yet. We have not had a clear indication that the government is prepared to come to grips with the transportation problems facing western Canada. Apparently the government is prepared to let western Canada be held to ransom by the railroads and the grain companies.

Our present situation is not altogether due to snowslides and difficult conditions in the mountains. The circumstances that exist were known as far back as when a Conservative government was in power prior to the Pearson government being elected. At that time meetings were held on the west coast to try to assess the problems facing the transportation of grain from western Canada. Since that time, and in addition to the movement of grain, we have been faced with the problem and the logistics involved in the movement of potash from Saskatchewan which has put another major volume of freight on our railroads.

• (2150)

We have also faced rapid growth in the movement of sulphur out of the province of Alberta. In other words, there has been a major increase in the volume of transportation and the need for transportation facilities in that period of time, but no comprehensive move on the part of the Department of Transport and those responsible on the other side of this House to meet that need.

When speaking to a certain individual the other day I mentioned that the only thing that has been done to my knowledge is that the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has built a five million bushel terminal at a cost of \$25 million in Vancouver. I asked if he knew of anything else that had been done in the way of accommodation for the increased movement of grain.

A number of solutions have been advanced, Mr. Speaker. Some people suggest an increase in the movement along the line to Prince Rupert, some say increase the amount of storage in the port of Vancouver, others suggest an increase in or building of storage at Roberts Bank, while still others propose the creation of additional trackage down to the coast. I submit that we need to do all those things. What I am saying to this House, Mr. Speaker, is that we need a massive investment in rail transportation and grain storage if we are to cope with the situation facing us. We have to reverse the thinking that has prevailed in this country with regard to rail transportation since the MacPherson report. That was an abandonment report which suggested abandoning branch lines and cutting down on service. We are now reaping the result of that attitude and must move forward to a progressive, expansionist approach.

In my constituency the branch lines are in such shape that some of the railroad men responsible for running the locomotives will book off and forfeit their earnings rather than put a locomotive over the branch lines running out of Biggar on the subdivision. You can believe that or not, but I have the evidence in letters from the brotherhood in the town of Biggar and I have sent them to the rail transport committee. On behalf of the workers I asked the committee to investigate the complaints and the condition of the