

*Western Grain Transportation Act*

over again to put provisions in place so that the Bill does not only benefit the railways but also benefits the producers. We feel that this Bill should protect the producers when the railways are moving grain, rather than protect the railways.

The Hon. Member for Regina West said in committee that the amendment we are proposing is simply window dressing. He made this comment on page 128:81 of Transport Issue No. 128. Now he rises in the House and says that this is a very good amendment. We appreciate that because it is an excellent amendment. It will give this clause some teeth.

I listened to Members of the NDP while one after another of them rose, and I found that they had a lot of difficulty understanding exactly what this amendment really means. They talked about the concept of the railways holding on to their cars. That really is not what we are trying to do by this amendment. We are trying to say that the railways ought to allow CN cars to run on CP lines pulled by CP engines, but in fact the rate would still go to the originator of the car. The problem is which company gets the rate. If the railway hauls something at a loss, it still wants however many dollars that are left. That railway company is not prepared to give that money to a competitor.

I heard many comments to the effect that this concept would create some difficulty with the free enterprise system and that we ought in some way to put these two railways together as a public utility. The Hon. Member for Regina East (Mr. de Jong) said that we would not have two power lines running side by side and I wondered if he had found that in his Province the CP ran in the southern part of the Province and the CN in the northern part, and that the problems arise in that small area in the middle.

We in Alberta have that same difficulty. In fact, CN cars were running one way and CP cars were running the other way on the same line. This instigated some negotiations between the two railways in an attempt to run cars on each other's lines. They found that, in effect, it balanced out and that there was no loss in revenue on this line at all. When the Prince Rupert terminal was being built, this difficulty came into question in a very serious manner because the line to Prince Rupert was a CN line, yet there was the necessity to move CP grain from the south to that terminal. Much time was spent in an attempt to have the two railways come together in an agreement.

When we read this Bill, we found that the Co-ordinator or Administrator really had no power to say that, if it is in the interest of the producer to maximize his returns, then that ought to be done. We ought not just to promote it; the power ought to be there to require it, particularly since we are putting forward so many hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies. We should not put this money forward to serve only the interest of the railways but also to serve the interest of the producers. That is why there ought to be some teeth in this proposal.

The clauses that we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, are Clauses 17 and 18 of the Bill, and particularly Clause 17. In committee many amendments were accepted that were pro-

posed by this Party in an attempt to strengthen that clause. The reason for those amendments is that we felt these clauses were too lenient to the railways, so we inserted in Subclause (b) and Subclause (d) of Clause 17 the word "reliability". In Subclause (d) we inserted the words "and reliable" and the words "for the purpose of maximizing returns to producers". We rewrote the whole of Subclause (2) in another attempt to air our concern for maximizing returns to producers.

We are now attempting to add the words "and shall require", which we attempted to add in committee but were turned down by the Government. We are now trying to make the same very strong argument that we made very effectively in committee in the hope that the Government will see the light and add those words. The Administrator in the past has operated very effectively by seeing to it that cars were placed in areas where producers could get the maximum benefit from those cars, and he ought to have the powers to do so again if the railways do not come to an agreement on exchange lines.

I must say again that we are not in any sense trying to give a CN car to CP but simply want to see the exchange of cars running on the line that is so necessary in the areas of the Prince Rupert terminal, the Churchill terminal and in some of those areas in the Provinces where the lines come together in the middle of the Province.

In most cases where reasonable, the railways have come to agreements. There certainly can be in the future areas where the Co-ordinator or the Administrator, in the best interests of the producers, would want to have the power that we are proposing here that will allow him to require the railroads to come together.

I remember when we first began to set up the position of Co-ordinator some four years ago that the same problem resulted in the delivery of what at that time was called rapeseed to the West Coast. I suppose the same was the case in Thunder Bay as well. In that case, it was not the railway companies but was each grain company that requested that its car of rapeseed be delivered to its facility in the port. When the train was picking up the commodity across the Prairies, it would pick up a Saskatchewan Wheat Pool car, a Pioneer car, a Cargill car and a United Grain Growers' car. These cars would perhaps be situated side by side on the train as it moved to the port. We found that a train of some 100 cars arriving in the port might require some 50 switches in order to get each car going to the proper facility when the same product was in each car. They simply would not exchange cars to move them into the facility. That was a very time-consuming practice which resulted in cars not getting back to the Prairies as quickly as they ought to.

After much discussion and after bringing this matter to the public sphere, we worked out an arrangement to pool cars which increased the turnaround capacity. You can see, Mr. Speaker, that if we would have the ability to give the Administrator those powers, then if the companies had not agreed voluntarily and it was in the best interests of the producers that that agreement be reached, the Administrator, with that best