

Western Grain Transportation Act

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, we already know but I am trying to have the Chair understand why the Liberal Government and the Tory Opposition are prepared to weaken the Canadian Wheat Board and orderly marketing. They want their friends in the CPR and the private grain trade to further decrease the powers of the Wheat Board and its ability to allocate cars in a proper proportion to the elevator companies that are owned by the farmers in order to give more cars to their friends in the Winnipeg commodity exchange and James Richardson and Son. I see the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson). He is in bed with Otto Lang. That is a strange couple, or maybe not so strange.

When we tried to get the mineral rights which was given to PanCanadian Oil in 1881, approximately nine million acres of oil and gas rights, I could understand why the Grits and the Tories were not very happy about that. While it was not a great sum, the Tories received \$1,200 and the Liberals received \$650 from PanCanadian Petroleum. That is a totally owned subsidiary of Canadian Pacific Enterprises. I think PanCanadian bought banquet tickets from the Tories. That is how they fill their banquet halls. The Liberals and Tories have the corporations pay for the tickets and then hand them out to their friends.

We know why the Conservatives have yet to say that they want to keep the Crow rate and stop this legislation, which they could have done weeks ago. The Tories have moved all these motions on unanimous consent which they will debate if we are lucky and then vote on. But they will vote against the Bill. It may look good but they still do not want to stop the Bill. They never have.

The architect of the legislation was hired by the Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski). We must have an idea of what is happening since the Liberals kept him on the payroll. The architect of the legislation refused to accept amendments No. 55 and No. 56 in the committee on behalf of the Government.

The control of the railway cars by the Canadian Wheat Board is essential because the sales, marketing and transportation of grain are inextricably linked and cannot be separated. We believe that control must remain with the Canadian Wheat Board and will not tolerate any sell-out to the contributors from Canadian Pacific Limited and this unholy alliance between the Conservatives and Liberals to get rid of the Crow rate. That has always been agreed to and accepted by the Tory Party here, if not in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Stan Schellenberger (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy listening to the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) talk about those steps he intends to take. At the same time, however, his Party has moved an amendment, after our amendment which would keep the Crow for three years, which in effect demolishes the Crow rate immediately. Their amendment moves the rate from 2.5 per cent to 3 per cent. I find that hard to believe.

Members will have noticed that the Member for Regina West did not really debate the motions at hand. He talked at great length about other issues because the motions which he

moved are not very strong, and when one does not have a strong case, one does not debate it. I can understand why. The authority of the Canadian Wheat Board to allocate cars existed for some time. It has had control of the placement of cars in the Prairies.

When we came to Government in 1979 everyone in the industry recognized that the system was not efficient and there was not an orderly movement of grain from the delivery point to the ports. The solution was obvious since it was used years ago, during the war, when it was essential to get food to the ports. It was decided that a neutral arbitrator should be in place, someone who could decide where the responsibility for decisions should lie in a neutral way.

That was the reason for establishing a co-ordinator and at that time a task force went across the nation, particularly in the Prairies where it was essential to get the information and to gather the facts. Most in the industry expressed the view that a co-ordinator should be put in place and that among other responsibilities he should act as a neutral arbitrator to help resolve problems that often lingered in that area at that time.

When that recommendation was made, the co-ordinator was not established to allocate cars only to the pools on the Prairies because they are not the only organization that has the producers' interest at heart. There is the United Grain Growers, which is also a co-operative, as well as Pioneer Grain Company, Parish and Heinbecker and Cargill. There are many other producer companies. For instance, there is the terminal that was built at Weyburn by producers who had difficulty getting cars, even though they built one of the most modern facilities on the Prairies, to deliver the farmer's product to the market.

Another fact which was made clear was that while the Canadian Wheat Board had the producers' interest at heart, it was basically in a conflict of interest with itself in regard to the allocation of cars. Obviously, its job was to sell grain in the export market and therefore it had a desire to get as much of that grain to the port as possible using the number of cars it had in the system. Therefore, rather than allocating cars as well to a very important domestic producing and processing industry, it would want to put cars into the export market. This is where the conflict arose. No one in the Wheat Board could make the arbitrary or neutral decision.

That is why the co-ordinator became so important in 1979. I think the co-ordinator is important today because a decision must be made about the use of cars in the system for delivery into the domestic market and the export market. While it might not be efficient to have a surplus of cars, there would be no difficult decisions to make because the Wheat Board could have control over the cars for the export market if there were more than needed. But that has never been the case. It is a very expensive storage program if we have too many cars in the system. It would be far better, given the number of cars that are necessary in the system, to use them in the most efficient manner. One day a greater turnaround means a