

Western Grain Transportation Act

prices in this country would have to at least triple. There is no question that if a farmer were permitted to receive a decent return on his investment and labour, food prices would have to triple. No one would be under any illusion as to what this would mean to our social and economic wellbeing in Canada. Obviously we could not pay the bill and it would be necessary to devise other means to subsidize those who would have to buy this expensive food.

Unfortunately, we are also exporting our cheap food policy. We are selling our agricultural products, particularly those for which the Crow rate is most important, our grain and cereal crops, to other countries at far below any reasonable cost of production. For instance, we are selling our wheat to the European Economic Community for almost 50 per cent less than what it is resold for within the EEC. In turn, the money that is earned by this exchange is used to subsidize European farmers, who have developed their own capacity to the point where they are now competing with us for our share in the world market. This is all as a result of the Government's decision to export our cheap food policy.

The farmer is charged with certain social obligations to feed the Third World. This is evident from the discussions about the food bank. If we were to sell lumber under a similar policy to that under which grain is sold, very soon the country to which we would be selling this lumber below the cost of production would run to GATT and remind us of some of the other treaty obligations we have under the OECD arrangement. We would be reminded that we cannot sell below the cost of production and subsidize the production of important industrial commodities. However, when you sell food, you can give it away to anyone you wish and no one complains. The reason for that is that other countries have not been as innovative as we have in finding ways to stabilize the farm economy and farm industry. It does not make sense.

Crow benefits were designed to support farmers. Instead, the subsidies that are inherent in the statute Crow rate are not going to the farmers or the railways. The subsidies are going to our customers. It is the Europeans, the Japanese and everyone else to whom we sell our grain that we are subsidizing.

I am a businessman in another sector although I still have my farm back home. As a businessman, I find it totally incomprehensible that we should sell far below the cost of production. In his cost of production I take into consideration a reasonable return on the farmers' investment and labour and the cost of transportation to bring the product to market. That is all part of the cost of production. I do not understand the logic behind selling this most important of our industrial commodities not only to the Third World countries that cannot afford to pay a higher price for them but to our partners in the OECD industrial world. Furthermore, we are selling our grain for half its worth to the Soviet Union so it can turn around and resell it within the East Block sphere of influence and use the credits we have given it as a gift to build up its strategic capacity. These are some matters which the Government has

totally ignored and which need to be considered before we can go about changing the Crow rate.

Mr. Malone: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to return to the point when the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) asked that I be given extended time. You said that it had already been signalled. What I am noticing is that it really is difficult for Members to know what the signal is. I am cognizant of the fact that often that signal is given at the eight minute mark. As a result of this practice, some of our new Members end up being cut short.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With all due respect to the Hon. Member, he is not making a point of order. If he wishes to have a private conversation with the Chair, the Chair would be more than pleased to discuss it with him.

However, the Hon. Member did go beyond his ten minutes. The Chair did its very best to communicate that fact to the Hon. Member. The Hon. Member just kept on speaking. The Chair rose and said that the Hon. Member's time expired, and the Hon. Member kept speaking. The Chair did its very best to interrupt.

There is a normal courtesy that is expected from Hon. Members with regard to the Chair. The Chair assures Hon. Members that it is a pleasure to reciprocate, but it must be a two-way street.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The normal courtesy is that the Speaker ask the House for unanimous consent for the Member to continue his remarks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Speaker rose to his feet and said that the Hon. Member's time had expired, and the Hon. Member kept speaking. The Hon. Member did not yield to the Speaker but stayed on his feet. I would suggest to Hon. Members that that is not the way in which they should choose to conduct themselves in the House.

Mr. Malone: First, Mr. Speaker, I would not in any way ever ignore you. I just never noticed you since I was speaking to the Minister. That is where I was addressing my comments.

I am not asking to speak now but simply saying, on another point of order, that I think it is very important that we in the House have some idea as to what gripping your chair and leaning forward means when that happens at the eight minute mark. We do not know when we are supposed to sit down. That time is not the same for each speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With all due respect, the Chair does not do that. The present incumbent has never done that at the eight minute mark. The suggestion that that is what the Chair practices is not fair.

I suggest that if the Hon. Member wishes to have a conversation privately, the present occupant of the chair would be pleased to do so. In the meantime, the Chair requests Hon. Members of the House to co-operate. Is the House ready for the question?

● (1730)

The Hon. Member for Winnipeg St.-James.