

Western Grain Transportation Act

such a large majority was because of this Minister and the Crow rate.

Let me say that I have a lot of respect for this Minister, the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mr. Pepin). He is such a kind person, yet he does not care about the West.

Mr. Smith: How can you sleep at night?

Mr. Paproski: I do not think it is really him; I think it is just the Liberal Party that does not care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Paproski: It is a heartless Party which does not really care what happens west of the Manitoba border. You people should be ashamed of yourselves.

Mr. Prud'homme: Where were you in 1968, Steve?

Mr. Paproski: I have had many calls in Edmonton from entrepreneurs who go through these different communities and towns and all they talk to me about is the Crow rate. These are people in my constituency, and I have an urban riding, who ask what the Government is doing. By doing what the Government is doing to the Crow rate, it is ruining the country. We in the West fear there will be many ghost towns all over the West.

The Bill must be changed from its present form; that is why we oppose the Bill. We do not know what its impact will be in towns and communities, particularly in the West. We do not know whether the Government will irrevocably alter this Bill. We do not know the nature and extent of any changes. For example, my colleague, the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson), quoted a calculation made by the Town Council of Gravelbourg in his riding which estimated that changes to the Crow would cost each Saskatchewan farmer \$8,500 by 1990. Can you imagine that, Sir? That would mean an outflow of over \$1 million per year for Gravelbourg alone. What will this amount of capital outflow mean to towns and villages all over the West? It is incredible. I cannot believe what this Bill is going to do to many of our communities in the West. How will they survive? How will they pay for the infrastructure and services they must provide, such as schools, hospitals and roads?

Oh, the Minister says double tracking. Big deal! Double tracking, fast tracking; we have heard that here for ten years. Every time the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) goes into an election he says they are going to twin this, twin that, do this or do that. We are still waiting for that highway to the Yukon, the Alaska Highway, which he said he was going to pave way back in 1974. I do not know who you are going to have, maybe blue-eyed Turner next time, and what is he going to twin?

Mr. Turner: You are talking about my uncle; be careful!

Mr. Paproski: Well, there is the whip. He likes you, whippy, over there. It is all right, you are going to be back. But there are a few of you under our new leadership who will not be back. The country will see the light.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. The Hon. Member should address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. Paproski: I really am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I get a little excited or emotional. We are still sort of hung over from the euphoria of our convention. The polls will be 55 per cent next month.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Paproski: This legislation would permit the railroads to offer incentives to farmers to bypass local elevators and truck their grain to the main lines. What effect will this have on the small town whose existence revolves around the elevators? Where will the elevator operators find jobs? How are farmers going to bear the increased costs once the statutory rates are abolished? Producers will be paying double the existing Crow rate by 1985-86, and in addition \$160 million will be taken out of the prairie economy. Farmers will pay five and a half times the Crow by 1991-92, which means that more than \$1 billion will disappear from western Canada. How many farm bankruptcies will result? How many people will be displaced? Where will they go? Where will they find jobs? How many towns will die? Are we going to have towns whose entire population, the forest service, the utility company, the post office and liquor store, will disappear? Is that going to be the community profile of the West, decaying little towns? We should really have magnifying glasses and sunshades here because of the heat in the House.

We do not know any of the answers to these questions and the Minister has not provided us any answers. Neither has Mr. Gilson. But we do know the serious flaws of this Bill. First, we believe the freight rate structure will provide for open ended escalation without any consideration for farmers' profit position on the value of grain. The Minister has mentioned a safety net provision but has not provided any details. Second, the grain farmers will have to pay the full Crow rate whenever grain movement exceeds 31.5 million tonnes. This represents a disincentive for farmers to grow more grain and increase production.

Mr. Rossi: Who wrote that speech?

Mr. Paproski: I did. The Bill includes new crops and specialty crops. The Minister has mentioned that some specialty crops are included but again he has provided no details. One would think that some Hon. Members who are out there in urban ridings do not know what the farm community really wants and what it requires. I just want Hon. Members to know that after one has been here for 15 years, one wants to ensure that one's speech is logical and one just carries on and carries on making sure that Hon. Members opposite understand what is going on.

● (1240)

Mr. Rossi: We understand very easily.

Mr. Paproski: The Bill is extremely complex and bureaucratic, as my colleague, the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr.