

this country had been allowed effectively to break the law. As was pointed out in debate earlier by the Hon. Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish), the railways have not bought any new rolling stock since the late forties or early fifties. Under Article 262 of the Railway Act, they are required to provide adequate rolling stock. They are required to provide boxcars, engines, etc. to be able to move grain effectively to the ports of this country. They have not done that for many years.

● (0030)

For the last 15 or 20 years, the Government of Canada has been buying hopper cars. In recent years, farmers have been buying them through their pools. In more recent years, we have seen the Governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta buying rolling stock because the railways refused to do it.

I listened to the radio show "Morningside" this morning. A professor from the University of Manitoba was talking with Peter Gzowski about the Crow issue. He put it very well, to my mind. He said that the railways had in effect been on strike. For a number of years they simply refused to live up to their obligations and to honour their contract to move grain to port. We are finally, in this piece of legislation, calling on the Minister to take every reasonable initiative to ensure that an adequate supply of rolling stock will be provided. This has been the law for these many years.

The amendment carries on to say that the Canadian Wheat Board shall administer and control any rail cars acquired or leased by the Board. Over the last few days when we have been debating these amendments most Members of this Party have pointed out that it is absolutely essential for the Canadian Wheat Board to have control of the entire grain handling system. It simply does not make any sense not to have this control. We debated earlier an amendment about the powers that will be given to the Administrator of the grain transportation authority. At that time Members in this corner of the House expressed their amazement and puzzlement at why the Government would want to take power away from the Wheat Board or why it would want to put yet another regulatory step in the whole process of moving grain.

After all, is it not the Wheat Board that is familiar with the system? Is it not the Wheat Board that makes the sales, knows where the grain is needed, when it is needed at such and such a point and where it is located when it comes into the elevators? Is it not the Wheat Board that is familiar with the grades and what grade is needed where, at which port and at what time?

Why do we want to break down a system that has been working very well in this country for years? There is no denying that the Wheat Board played a very important and major role in western Canada. Why do we want to break it down?

In Motion No. 56, we talked about removing the ability to transfer the administration and control from the Wheat Board to the Minister of Transport. This provision of the Bill causes a great deal of concern. For years farmers have learned to look at various Ministers of Transport with less than complete

trust. They have seen Ministers of Transport who have diminished the authority and effect of the Canadian Wheat Board. Many years ago we had a Minister in the Diefenbaker Conservative Government who took domestic feed grains away from the Wheat Board. This process was continued until a former Liberal Minister of Transport, to whom the Hon. Member for Saskatoon East (Mr. Ogle) earlier referred and had the great pleasure of defeating in 1979, diminished the power of the Wheat Board and its effect on the Prairies.

We heard from the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) who for a period of time was Minister of Transport. He is now a great defender of the Crow rate. In the few months that he was in power, he started to put into process the very moves we are now going through. He started to put steps into place that would have led to the scrapping on the Crowsnest Pass freight rates, probably much earlier than we are dealing with them today.

The Minister of Transport before this Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) when visiting western Canada promised he would not move on the Crowsnest Pass freight rates until such time as there was a consensus on the Prairies. The committee found out this summer when it travelled across the Prairies that there is anything but consensus on how the changes should be made.

The successive Ministers have all betrayed the trust of farmers. Now we want to move the control and administration of grain cars away from the Wheat Board, the body that farmers have learned to trust over the half century that it has been in existence, and move it into the office of the Minister of Transport. I do not want to cast any aspersions on the present or any future occupant of that office, but farmers with good cause—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member, but the time allotted to him has expired.

**Mr. Sargeant:** I have an absolutely brilliant speech to carry on, if the House will agree.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Hon. Member has already been given an extension beyond the ten minutes normally permitted.

**Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Motions Nos. 55 and 56 to amend Clause 33. Railroaders call this hour of the night the graveyard shift. That is exactly what it is. I am pleased to be here to speak to this amendment to the Bill because it goes to the very root of what this legislation is about.

The original Crow's Nest Agreement stated that the railways would supply the equipment, cars and rolling stock for the handling of grain. That was not done. Throughout the years, the railways kept getting out and getting the Government more involved in putting in the money. The Government has put literally hundreds of millions of dollars into rolling stock. It has now started leasing it out. The railways have gone to the Government asking it to release those cars from the Wheat Board and the pools which are leasing to it and have