

years, and that feed grain prices would rise dramatically. Is that how we built this country? No, Mr. Speaker, we built it with a narrow band of steel linking 4,000 miles of every type of terrain with a few million people, deeply in debt and against greater odds than the world had ever seen. We still face the same transportation problems, with only 25 million people spread across the great expanse of our country.

The farmer was promised a fair statutory rate 86 years ago and it must be perpetuated now. Farm income has dropped 35 per cent and the 31.1 million tonne cap will be a disincentive, not an incentive. Again, we on this side are appalled that the Government would subsidize railroads over the free enterprise farmer. By 1990 the railroads will receive a 1,000 per cent increase in the freight rates. In heaven's name, why? I am afraid it is because it is easier to control this country that way, Mr. Speaker; just as with Canagrex it is easier to control the production of food.

Mr. Mazankowski: It is all a grandiose scheme; state control.

Mr. Stewart: We are seeing, slowly but surely, state control by the people opposite.

The Members of the NDP pay lip service to the desirability of having this Bill held up. The Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Mrs. Mitchell) wants to know where we stand. Well, we stand for the fullest debate possible, to the last possible speaker. I would just like to read into the record from page 26549 of *Hansard* of June 20, 1983, in order to show who wants to keep this debate alive. The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) moved that Bill C-185, and he meant Bill C-155:

—an Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof, be not now read a second time but that the order for second reading be discharged, the Bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

These are the people who want to debate the Bill. A little further along we heard from another speaker, the Hon. Member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish), who said as reported at page 26567:

In no way should he consider himself a candidate for the committee that will study Bill C-155. We want someone in the Chair who will be objective and take into consideration not only the wishes of the railway companies like the CPR and the grain companies like Cargill, but also the wishes of grain farmers throughout Canada. We want this to be a special committee. We would like to see two NDP Members on the committee in order to provide some kind of fairness—

But they do not care about speaking on this Bill and opposing it. They just talk about it. Once again I ask you to check the record on the number of speakers this Party has put forward and the stand this Party has taken. I would also ask you to check on the sentiments of the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) who, as I have said so many times in this House, has forgotten more about grain transportation than those across the aisle will ever know.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy).

Mr. Malone: What has Churchill got to do with grain?

Western Grain Transportation Act

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I heard one of the Hon. Members from the Conservative Party just now ask what Churchill has to do with grain? In doing so he of course is only echoing the thoughts of the Hon. Member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) who called Churchill a costly luxury which we could not afford. He echoes the thoughts of the Hon. Member for North Vancouver-Burnaby (Mr. Cook) who called for grain to go through Thunder Bay and not Churchill. If the Hon. Member is telling me by his rude remarks that it is the Conservative Party's official position that they want to get rid of Churchill, and I believe that is the case, then I am glad he has the honesty to admit it.

In rising to speak against the attempt by the Liberal Government to close off debate on the Crow issue, Mr. Speaker, I would like to explain why we in the New Democratic Party, and why I as the representative of the Churchill constituency are opposed to the Government's legislation.

• (1830)

At the present time, the Port of Churchill is the closest route from the grain area to much of Europe. For many farmers, the cheapest way to ship their grain is through the Port of Churchill and into Europe.

The reason we are afraid of the legislation the Government is presenting is that it will allow for variable rates. Under the present legislation, all grain is transported on the same per mileage rate. That means that the rail companies will not be allowed to charge different rates on grain that goes from, say, Saskatoon to Churchill compared to grain which would go from Saskatoon to Thunder Bay or perhaps, if the railways had their way, even from Saskatoon into the States.

We are concerned that under the cover of updating the present Crowsnest rate structure, the Government is changing the whole direction of transporting grain in the West. Not only is the Port of Churchill threatened, but many of the lines from smaller communities to the central communities are threatened by the legislation as well. That is affecting the way of life and the economy of those small communities. It affects farmers and people who run stores in those communities. It affects the very real social life of those communities.

As Your Honour knows, we have presented a number of petitions in the House of Commons signed by residents of very many small communities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. They realize, much more than the Liberal majority in the House, and much more than some of the people who have spoken on the Conservative side, how important the Crowsnest rate statute has been to their way of life. They are not being selfish. They are not looking strictly at their pocketbooks, although we know that if the legislation were to pass it would mean vast increases in the cost to the farmers of moving grain in that region. However, they also realize that if the legislation were to pass the whole fabric of rural society in western Canada would be destroyed. These are people who have grown up in small towns and who have farmed in those areas, people who have worked in the grocery and hardware stores, to