

Western Grain Transportation Act

to enter into agreements with trucking firms or to allow producers to enter into agreements with trucking firms for the transport of grain by truck when it was in their best interests. It is only logical to conclude that although Clause 17(4) indicates that the Administrator may form an opinion, he would not form an opinion unless he consulted with the shippers and producers involved. I find it rather strange that Hon. Members of the House would believe that the Administrator would be so incompetent as to enter into such an agreement based only on his opinion. Of course this is a legal way of phrasing legislation and does not mean that it precludes consultation. The effect of the amendment would be that he has the ability to enter into agreements only in areas where branch lines have already been abandoned and where there is no longer the opportunity to move grain by rail.

What is the point of having Clause 17(4) if we virtually negate its purpose by accepting Motion No. 35? What surprises me most is that the Conservatives, having achieved the inclusion of Clause 17(4) in the Bill, will now emasculate it by supporting the NDP counterproductive amendment. I do not know how they can square that with their desire to have Clause 17(4) in the first place. It is not what I would have expected from that Party.

I know that all committee members have worked at this diligently. I was surprised in committee when the Tories supported this rather nonsensical amendment. I say "nonsensical" in the sense that it destroys the sense of the subclause it amends. This clause does not deal with the abandonment of branch lines, with the corporate make-up of trucking firms or with how they operate. It deals only with the powers of the Administrator. In my opinion most of the debate we have heard today has been extraneous to the issue. I agreed this morning with the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) when he indicated the necessity for Clause 17(4), but I believe that that necessity will be almost totally negated if we accept the NDP amendment. Therefore, I urge the Official Opposition to change its position on this, to be consistent and to support the amendment achieved at committee stage of the Bill.

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, in supporting the amendment of the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), I would first like to clarify for the record what that amendment is. It reads:

That Bill C-155 be amended in Clause 17 by striking out line 25 at page 8 and substituting the following therefor:

"the grain producers, but such agreements shall not provide for the movement of grain by motor vehicle transport from shipping points on rail lines which have not been abandoned by order of the Canadian Transport Commission."

It would clearly limit any subsidy paid for the trucking of grain to delivery points which are not served by a branch line.

In speaking on Motion No. 34, I stated clearly that the New Democratic Party position could be summed up, in relation to both this amendment and the previous one, as being that we want the best possible results for the grain producers of western Canada and for the people of Canada at the least

possible cost. As far as we are concerned, this would rule out any proposal which would end up giving grants and subsidies to anybody and everybody who comes along.

I was somewhat mystified by some of the comments on this amendment by Members of the Progressive Conservative Party, as I was when the previous amendment was before the House. The Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) made comments which led some of my colleagues and me to believe that he was opposing our amendment. Later he suggested that he was supporting it. I can only conclude that the Progressive Conservative Party has shown a remarkable degree of consistent inconsistency throughout the entire Crow debate. Not only has it changed position as to whether or not it supported the so-called reform of the entire package, as it shilly-shallied, flim-flammed and went back and forth on whether it was for or "agin" it, it appears that the same representative, the Hon. Member for Vegreville, seems undecided as to whether or not he is in favour of, or opposed to, the amendment before us. I suppose we should not be surprised. It is rather typical of the schizophrenia implicit in the nature of any Party with a contradictory name like "Progressive Conservative"—two words with opposite meanings. Its record in this whole debate, as has been the case in many others since the resumption of this session on September 12, has indicated that as well.

Before lunch the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson) seemed to suggest in a brief dissertation that the Gallup poll result reported this morning was somehow indicative of the position that Party had taken since September 12, forgetting that the polling was conducted prior to the recommencement of this session. I am willing to bet that the Conservative Party will fall in the next Gallup poll; there is not much dispute of that. One of the major reasons for that will be what the Hon. Member for Western Arctic mistakenly suggested was the cause of the current result, what has been going on in the House over the last month, as that Party changed its position two or three times on the reform of the Crow and took a schizophrenic position on this particular amendment. If it is not a schizophrenic position, I hope one of its Members will rise to make its position clear.

In the same way as the new Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party wants to provide jobs for all living and breathing Conservatives, to people with only that qualification, Conservative Members also want to ensure that they can give out subsidies and contracts to every Tory contractor for the next 15 years before considering anyone else. If that is their only purpose, I suggest that they had better come clean. Perhaps one of them will edify us as to what is their real purpose in either supporting or opposing the amendment before us. We are having a difficult time trying to analyse—never mind their motivations, we would never question those—what they intend to do. Do they know what they are doing, Mr. Speaker? With this point as with many others, it seems to be a matter of just offering contracts to their friends. This is illustrated by the speech of the Conservative Party Leader as reported in the *Montreal Gazette* on May 18 dealing with the