

grated system. However, that is a subject for debate on another day. We should at least take the first step toward efficiency with the amendment now before us, Motion No. 33.

We argue that the Grain Transportation Agency has been given excessive powers. The Administrator has too much power in the sense that his powers could encroach upon the authority of the Canadian Wheat Board. However, that is the situation. We would have done it differently if we were in government. However, we are not; we are in opposition. We have to see how we can make the system the most efficient through amendments which can be put in place, given the context that it is beyond our control to make change. That is why we support this amendment. No matter what public agency has control over the transportation of grain, whether it be the Wheat Board, the Canadian Grains Commission, the Grain Transportation Agency or whatever, there must be the ability to direct the railways to exchange cars in order to promote efficiency.

Mr. Justice Hall is well known as a fighter against the Crow rate changes and is a knowledgeable person on the whole question of transportation. He made some interesting remarks on this. He really gets to the heart of the difficulty before us. I quote from his testimony:

We heard a lot about efficiency, and the whole idea of the railways about efficiency was to get rid of the branch-lines. That would have been very efficient from their stand-point. But on this question of efficiency, I am told by senior railway people, there is a railway philosophy that once the line gets hold of a commodity for transport, it will hang onto that commodity to the delivery points, come hell or high water. That works out this way and this is what we found, great quantities of grain grown on, say, the Goose Lake line . . . and now that may not mean too much to members from the east, but it is one of the great grain-producing areas in Saskatchewan between Saskatoon and Calgary served by the Canadian National Railways; it is closer to Vancouver at Rosetown than to Thunder Bay, so the trend is westward. Grain was taken to Calgary, but the CN has no line going from Calgary to Vancouver. So they hauled it then northward 200 miles to Edmonton so they can take it south again to Vancouver. That was the CN.

That is an example of an extremely wasteful procedure. It costs money and it is inefficient for the whole economy. It wastes energy. This is the kind of thing that has been going on. I again quote Mr. Justice Emmett Hall:

CP with the Hardisty line, which is another line going through Edmonton all that CPR grain went to Edmonton, but there is no line from Edmonton into Vancouver—so it went south to go to Vancouver. Trainloads of grain were passing each other like ships in the night between Calgary and Edmonton.

There we have examples regarding both CN and CP. Both were offenders in hanging on to the commodity they had. They were not concerned about efficiency in the system. They were not concerned about the farmer, only about getting a buck by keeping the commodity under their control.

An interesting exchange came up in the Transport Committee hearings in Regina with Mr. Justice Emmett Hall and a Member of Parliament. Referring to the railways he said:

If they continue to do business the way they are doing it now, and that is as though they both existed in a separate country and did not co-operate, I do not suppose there is very much we can do. But if the railways could come to a situation where the principle of transportation would be to the nearest port by the shortest route, you could increase the capacity very substantially.

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Increasing the capacity is important. There have been hold-ups, which means people do not get their money when they should. Unfortunate situations have occurred as a result of these hold-ups. The Member of Parliament then asked:

This may be a bit of a naive question, but how do you get the railways to do that under the present system; under what we have?

Mr. Justice Hall replied:

I do not think it is by enriching them at the farmers' expense.

I heartily agree. Let me give a couple more examples of inefficiency, of wasteful use of energy. I wish to quote my colleague who has been leading our struggle regarding the Crow rate. He said:

The administrator is going to have a heck of a time getting co-operation. It was tough enough before, but under this new regime, and with the guarantees of variable costs plus in the rate system, the railroads would be damn fools to agree to move grains off their lines onto somebody else's line any sooner than they absolutely had to. They would be damn fools to do it—

CN would be smarter to draw grain from far south of Hudson Bay and all the way down the Gravelbourg, and get their maximum variable costs plus, rather than rely on grain coming on CP tracks from Yorkton to Hudson Bay. Either one of the railways would be crazy to go into any kind of reciprocal arrangement, at least up to the point where they get their maximum variable costs plus contributions to constant cost.

The railways are in it to make a buck. We have seen this with both CN and CP. They do not care very much about the producer. Only if they are forced into making these arrangements will it be suitable for the producers and we will have efficiency. They do not do it willingly.

● (1230)

It is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, that they be forced to do that, and that is the reason for the amendment that is before us today. That is the reason we are all concerned that the Government is not listening but is quite happy to let the railways go along making a buck and turning some of that money back to the Government by way of campaign contributions. The Government is not concerned about the energy conservation or efficiency aspects of the matter or about serving the farmers. We think it is about time the Government listen to reason and support the amendment before us today.

Mr. Stan Schellenberger (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening with some interest to the Hon. Members of the NDP who have made a lot of noise about whether Members of our Party are speaking or not. I want to point out that there have been some excellent speeches made by Members on this side on this amendment. As well, the point was really made at committee where the only Member of the NDP present most of the time was the "Lone Ranger". We in this Party had a full complement of Members present throughout the hearings and committee reports.

It is very interesting to note that the NDP has been constantly opposed to the idea of the Grain Co-ordinator. Even at the time we were setting that Co-ordinator up, the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) and his colleagues were totally opposed to setting up the Co-ordinator. The Government has decided that it will provide for an Administrator and we have rewritten the clauses of the Bill over and