

He said: Mr. Speaker, when dealing with Motions Nos. 55 and 56, we are dealing with another serious and fundamental issue in this proposed legislation, namely, the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board and its jurisdiction over the allocation of railway cars that have been purchased by the taxpayers, let alone the railway cars that the railways own. There gets to be fewer and fewer of those cars every day.

Several speeches have been made by my hon. friends from the Official Opposition on a motion which we have not dealt with as yet. I only want to say, Sir, that a 3 per cent cap on a safety net means that if, as and when grain prices go down, we could end up in a situation where the railways would even have to refund money. I invite my colleagues from the Conservative Party to go back to the drawing board and take another look at that 3 per cent cap.

The Government's motion regarding the safety net refers to 4 per cent, 5 per cent, 6 per cent, 7 per cent, 8 per cent, 9 per cent and 10 per cent. Our motion would mean that 3 per cent is the maximum forever and a day. Since grain prices will probably keep going down as they have over the last three years, I invite my Conservative colleagues to take another look at that before they start shooting off their mouths about breaking the Crow rate.

The truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that Members of the Conservative Party to this day have yet to say that they are in favour of keeping the Crowsnest Pass rate as is. In fact, they are in favour of doing away with it. However, they are not in favour of doing away with it today as are Liberal Members. Oh no, they are speaking about three years and then two and a half years and now they are speaking about two years. But they are still in favour of killing the Crow.

I have in my possession some Conservative literature from the last provincial election in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Bloomfield: Who won?

Mr. Benjamin: Well, talking about false pretences, the literature read:

The Crow Rate must remain!

The shortfall must be paid for by the federal government.

We oppose any plan to use Saskatchewan dollars—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must call to the attention of the Hon. Member the rule of relevance. Remarks made at report stage of the Bill, as the Hon. Member well knows, must be strictly relevant to the amendments before us.

Mr. Benjamin: Exactly, Mr. Speaker, and when dealing with Motions Nos. 55 and 56, keeping the Crow rate means keeping the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board. On my right is the outfit that is in favour of decreasing the powers of the Wheat Board in cahoots with the Liberals. The Tories said: "Let's keep the Crow rate, vote PC in Souris-Cannington, vote for Eric Berntson; a Progressive Conservative government will say that the Crow rate must remain." That comes from their literature, Mr. Speaker. Keeping the Crow rate means keeping the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board and we cannot separate the two.

Western Grain Transportation Act

I could go on and read some more Tory literature about keeping the Crow, but Members of the Conservative Party in the House and outside of the House have yet to say unequivocally that the statutory grain rate must remain in place. It must remain in place not for a year and a half or for two years or for two and a half years or for three years: it must remain in place for western grain producers.

During the committee hearings we heard from officials of the Canadian Wheat Board, from officials of the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee, from Mr. Charlie Gibbings, former Commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board for some dozen years or more, and from the prairie Wheat Pools. They all said the same thing, Mr. Speaker. I invite my colleagues who were on the committee to refresh their memories. I am quoting Mr. Jarvis:

The board, like any other sales organization, must control the shipment of its own product in order to ensure performance. For these reasons, the board has always held the view that overall control of the system as it is developed in co-ordination with the total of the grain industry should be administered by the board.

Motions Nos. 55 and 56 retain the control of the railway cars that have been purchased by farmers and taxpayers in the hands of the Canadian Wheat Board. For the reasons given by the Board and by the Board's Advisory Committee and for the reasons that we gave when dealing with earlier amendments for facilitating sales, knowledge of the location and grades of grains and protection of the block system, these cars must remain under the control of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Motion No. 56 takes away from the Government or the Grain Transportation Commissioner the ability through Order in Council to transfer any administrative control over those cars away from the Canadian Wheat Board. Throughout the history of this legislation, the Canadian Wheat Board Act, the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement and the Canadian Pacific Railway Act, it did not matter if it was a Tory government, Liberal government or the CPR because their word was no good. A deal is a deal. We specifically know why the Conservatives in the last couple of weeks are interested in going along with the Liberals to do away with the statutory grain rate. The reason is that Canadian Pacific Limited doubled their contribution to the Tory and Liberal Parties last year. They raised it from \$25,000 to \$50,000 each.

• (2230)

An Hon. Member: Do you have proof?

Mr. Benjamin: Yes, thanks to the Chief Electoral Officer and thanks to the fact that during a minority Parliament we were able to have legislation on election expenses passed which allowed us to get this information.

Furthermore, Mr. Burbidge, President of CP, did not give the Tories anything but gave the Liberals \$221.68.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With all due respect to the Hon. Member, he does appear to be straying from the amendment before the House. I would invite him to return to the amendment.