

say very bluntly that the use of truckers is an invitation for private enterprise to function properly.

● (1630)

I want to digress a moment and talk about an interesting part of the committee stage when we were travelling. On one occasion when we were spending a weekend in Regina, various people arranged, for the benefit of some of the members of the committee and some of the staff people, to visit the Weyburn terminal grain elevator, which is a marvellous piece of construction that is a great credit and tribute to the number of farmers who were behind it and built it a number of years ago. When we had some time off, we were taken on a tour. It was a beautiful day, a Sunday afternoon. We stopped in at one of the grain farmer's on the southwest corner of the city of Regina. He was just getting ready for harvest and told us about trucking his own grain well over 100 miles to the Weyburn terminal elevator, which he decided entirely on his own. He had no trouble making the decision because he felt it was worthwhile for him to hire commercial truckers to haul that grain well over 100 miles from his farm, just on the outskirts of Regina, to the Weyburn terminal.

When we arrived down at the terminal, we found 50 loaded hoppers cars on a track ready to be hauled away, and another 50 that had been spotted on the very day we were there. So here was a total of 100 grain hopper cars ready to be moved. However, the grain was coming in, of course, by truck. The think that made the system work in this case, according to the farmer we saw from over 100 miles away, was that he was able to pay the trucking, hauling it those 100 miles, then receiving cash for his dockage and screenings, enough to pay the costs of the trucking. Surely that was a lesson to us all on that occasion. I see the Chairman of the committee nodding his head. I think it is regrettable that the whole committee did not have the opportunity to see that special demonstration, if you like, of what a combination of a good, modern, efficient trucking system and railway system can do for our grain handling and transportation system.

I want to say very briefly that I cannot agree with some of the arguments that have been advanced by the New Democratic Party on this particular amendment, when it was in committee stage, suggesting that by encouraging, shall we say, a modern network of market roads and an efficient trucking system, we will damage those roads. This is nonsense, of course. There was a time when we were travelling with perhaps fairly heavily loaded grain trucks on dirt roads that were not properly built, but no longer. Surely, this is the situation, that no longer is it a viable argument at all to say that just by trucking grain we will wear out our roads. They are well constructed now, and it is nothing but nonsense to advance that argument.

I want to describe another situation where the trucking industry, closer to my own home on the Alberta-Saskatchewan border, is of special significance. I cite the branch line to a branch line that ends up at the towns of Schuler and Hilda, very close to the Saskatchewan-Alberta border. From those

points, there is no connecting railway direct to the main line into Medicine Hat or, for that matter, directly into Swift Current. There is a very roundabout way. One must travel a long way north to reach the subdivision that runs between Swift Current-Empress and ends up on the CPR main line again at Bassano. One must travel well over 100 miles to haul grain from Schuler and Hilda by rail into Medicine Hat, a distance of only about 40 miles. Here is a situation where grain trucking by the private sector, by the farmer himself, by the flour mills in Medicine Hat, is just nothing but good common sense in moving grain.

I would like to describe one other situation for the House. Throughout southern Alberta and a good bit of southwestern Saskatchewan, we have only one railway system. That is the CPR. There have never been branch lines of the CNR in southern Alberta or southwestern Saskatchewan. It is true that in the very early days there were reported to have been branch lines surveyed and the possibility of building them into both Medicine Hat and Swift Current was discussed, but they were never built. Today we have what I would describe as an adequate system of branch lines and the main line, of course, all CPR, supplemented by a very good, efficient, market road system in both our Provinces and a good commercial trucking system whereby the farmers themselves are willing and able to truck their own grain.

I see that Your Honour is becoming anxious. I would just like to end by saying that to deny in any way or even to discourage grain trucking when appropriate would be a seriously retrograde step.

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I, too, wish to join in the debate on Motion No. 34 that would strike out the section in the Bill that would allow the Administrator to enter into agreements to move grain by motor vehicle. This is one of the most mischievous aspects of the Bill in front of us, one of the most mischievous clauses. We have heard today, mainly from Members of the Conservative Party, all sorts of reasons for which trucking should be encouraged and that trucking can indeed help grain producers. Some sexy arguments have been advanced in favour of trucking. Of course, the long-term effects, the over-all effects, the more global effects that trucking would have on the grain transportation system in western Canada have not been discussed or mentioned by Members of the Official Opposition.

There might be cases in which it can be argued that trucking is to the immediate advantage of certain individuals at a particular time. However, what the amendment allows is trucking on a much larger scale. It opens the door to trucking as a major competitor against the rail system of moving grain. Some Members of the Conservative Party would object to this; but surely, going through the speeches we have heard this afternoon, we find it is admitted by most of the Conservatives speakers that they want to see a competitive system where trucking competes against the railroad. I do not understand that argument. One does not have two different highways running beside each other, competing with each other. One does not have two different power lines and power companies