

amendments. The motion by a Government Member that the question now be put prevents the Chair from considering whether an amendment is in order and is a reasoned amendment. That surely is some kind of an assault on the rights and privileges of Members of Parliament on all sides of the House. Since the Chair is the servant of all Members, I hope that sometime in the course of the debate on this Bill, however long it will last, the Chair will decide that that is enough, and that as a servant of the House it will say there has to be an opportunity to speak for the Members on all sides.

I want to move a motion, seconded by an Hon. Member. The Chair will probably have no choice but to rule it out of order or inadmissible. If nothing else, it may get a message across to the Government Member who would move such a motion before any other Member of the House had an opportunity to present a reasoned amendment.

● (1820)

I want to deal with some of the points made by the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) whom I consider a friend and colleague. We have served in this House together for quite a few years. I should like to deal with what he and his Party call freedom of choice. Whose freedoms are the Tories trying to protect, Mr. Speaker—the grain farmers, members of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the farmers' union, the Manitoba elevators, cow-calf operators? The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities has said that the difference between the Crow rate and the proven cost of hauling grain should be paid directly to the railroads and that the Government should have some say in what it does with the money. The Hon. Member for Vegreville says that farmers should have freedom of choice. What kind of freedom of choice does that give them? It gives them the freedom of choice to pay more money to the railroads. That is the great freedom that is proposed by the Conservatives.

Mr. Mazankowski: How can you say that?

Mr. Benjamin: The Conservative Party has been in favour of the grain producers paying more money for freight changes. That is one of the freedoms of choice that the Hon. Member for Vegreville and other Members of his Party want to propose and see proposed in Parliament.

Mr. Mazankowski: Be honest.

Mr. Benjamin: Let us consider another freedom of choice that the Hon. Member for Vegreville wants to give to grain producers in western Canada and that is the freedom of choice to reduce the price for grain at the farm gate by \$25 or \$30 per tonne. The freedom of choice that the Conservative Party offers to farmers in western Canada is the choice to reduce the price at the farm gate.

Under the proposal of the Hon. Member for Vegreville farmers have the freedom to dilute the benefit to producers by spreading the so-called Crow benefit to cultivated acres which do not produce statutory grain. Then there is the psychological freedom of choice which is outweighed by reduced economic

choices. There is the freedom of the railway companies to manipulate freight rates to close down country elevators and branch lines, and that is called freedom of coercion or legalized blackmail. That is the so-called freedom of choice proposed by the Tory Party. It would force the farmer to take the money and haul his grain 50 or 100 miles farther away. The branch lines would be closed and the elevator of which the farmer is part owner would be shut down. That is the freedom of choice that the Tories offer.

I have listened to Tories talk about efficiency in Government. It seems to me that freedom of choice means that instead of sending two cheques in payment, one to the CNR and one to the CPR, what we would have would be an administrative nightmare.

The Hon. Member for Vegreville went to great lengths to show how complicated the Bill is and he quoted several clauses for that purpose. His so-called freedom of choice alternative would mean that the Bill would have to be rewritten and would probably be twice as long as it is now. It would mean sending out 150,000 cheques instead of two. It would mean setting up a bureaucracy for those farmers who decide that they want to take the money and for those farmers who want to let the railroads take it. I invite you to kick me in the head, Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Benjamin:—but I should like to move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse):

That Bill C-185, 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.

The Chair may have no choice in this in view of the motion presented by the Government, but Members of the Opposition have a right, and we exercise this right, to present a reasoned amendment and, as the Chair well knows, reasoned amendments are difficult to arrive at. I should like to hear from the Chair not only whether it is in order but whether it is a reasoned amendment. From some comments I heard this morning from the Chair, I think the occupant at that time had run out of string. I hope that the Chair will respond today, tomorrow or next day—I do not care when.

I hope the Conservative Party will explain about its so-called bastardization of freedom of choice, the freedom of grain producers to pay more, the freedom of grain producers to lose their branch lines, the freedom to lose their country elevators. I should like the Conservatives to explain that. They have been getting away with this Proposition 13, Ronald Reagan syndrome imported from California and have been peddling that nonsense which flies in the face of Canadian practice, which flies in the face of our national unity, which flies in the face of co-operative federalism and pits farmer against farmer, one region against another. Surely that is a betrayal of our Confederation. You cannot have livestock producers trying to gyp grain farmers, their neighbours, out of \$25 or \$30 per tonne on