

Western Grain Transportation Act

This lack of comprehension of Canada as a nation has also been emulated by the failure of the Government to bring forward an effective plant breeders rights Act or, in place of that, to stimulate a grain research policy which would relieve the federal Government of the requirement for subsidy to produce a profitable cash crop for eastern farmers.

Recently some Members of the Agriculture Committee of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom visited Canada. It was my pleasure to be a guest of the Minister of Agriculture as he entertained Canada's guests. It was my pleasure to sit beside a Member of the U.K. House of Commons who advised me that in their research program they have been developing varieties of wheat which now produce four or five tons per acre. Also, the research structure has been asked to produce a variety which will yield six tons per acre. The research people have responded that this may be available for farmers sometime within the next five years.

Again, we have no national policy on agricultural research when the total needs of agriculture are examined. There are reports of very high yields in other varieties of grains which are presently being produced in Europe. The climate in many areas of Europe is somewhat comparable to that of Atlantic Canada. Perhaps the Minister and the Government as a whole would be relieved of hearing such remarks as I have made today if our farmers had access to higher yields of grain in the Maritimes, but these we do not nor cannot have under existing conditions.

It is therefore imperative on behalf of maritime speakers that I demand of this Minister that he should be a strong proponent of agricultural policy in respect of grain production and that while waiting for such a change to take place, it is imperative that the feed-freight assistance program be given more money to restore eastern Canada to a competitive position with other producers of this nation. I sincerely believe that I am making only a reasonable request.

Lastly, I wish to say once more, let us have a cost analysis of the impact of the Crow rate legislation upon the eastern Canadian feeder. Let us accompany this legislation with an appropriate Government policy, first, to reduce the discrepancy which presently exists in the competitive structure of meat production in Canada, and second, to make very sure that this legislation will not further aggravate a very unfavourable situation.

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to enter into this debate, although the topic under discussion, doing away with the Crow rate, is anathema to most principled-thinking Canadians, even in central Canada let alone western Canada. Quite frankly, I do not know why we are wasting the time of the House on such an iniquitous Bill. I congratulate the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) for his amendment to hoist the Bill for six months. It is too bad we cannot hoist Bills like this for six years or 60 years.

Most Members who spoke this afternoon represent western constituencies. I represent a constituency in southern Ontario. I am as vitally concerned about the long-term adverse effects of doing away with the statutory Crow rate as any Member

from western Canada. It will impact adversely on a constituency such as mine.

Before I get into the specifics as to how it will impact adversely on a constituency like Brant, I would like to ask a rhetorical question. Where have all the Liberals gone? If this is such a great Bill, why can the Minister responsible for bringing in the Bill not muster moral support around him? Where are all the Liberal speakers to stand up and support the Government? They have disappeared. I see one putting up his hand and leaving the Chamber. So much for his dedication. I would have thought that Liberal after Liberal would have been getting up on a Bill like this to defend the Government. I have to agree with many of them that it is probably indefensible but, at least in a political sense they could put forward some arguments that would help to create the impression that the Liberals are not entirely bent on self-destruction west of Ontario.

This Bill will not aid or assist the Liberal Party west of Ontario. Once again the Liberal Government is not paying any attention to the ordinary people in western Canada, particularly the grain growers and farmers. I am not talking about the agri-corporations, but the ordinary family farms. While the Liberals are bent on self-destruction in the West in a political sense, they are determined, through this legislation, to wipe out the family farm. That is what will eventually happen. The family farmer on the Canadian Prairies will not be able to compete in years to come with the added freight costs which he will have to bear.

Our chief competitors, the United States, most European nations, Australia, Brazil, Argentina and so on, are heavily subsidized by their Governments. They subsidize the grain producers directly. If this Bill goes through, and the Liberals are determined to force it through with closure, I can see a very bad situation developing on the Prairies in the future. The family farm will disappear. Indeed, for all practical purposes, we may eventually go out of grain producing in the West as far as individual farms are concerned. Large agri-corporations may continue to develop and broaden and become more powerful in the West. Once again the ordinary family farmer is being kicked in the pants by an autocratic and arrogant Government that is determined to have its way over even basic common sense.

Second, what about the CPR, the great bastion of free enterprise that opened up the West and united this country from sea to sea? There is a lot of mythology about the CPR. I have great respect for the old Van Hornes and the gang that helped to build the CPR. I also have much respect for the Irish navies and the Chinese workers to whom no monuments are built anywhere in the country but who actually did the hard, sweaty labour that built the railroad across the country. Hundreds of these labourers died on the job because of exhaustion, because of lack of proper food and because of accidents. But we seem to praise the CPR as a great example of how free enterprise can build a united country. Well, I believe that very few Canadians fully appreciate the fact that 60 per cent of all