

Mr. Nystrom: The reason I support Motion No. 34 is that I come from a very rural riding. There are many rail lines in that community and the farmers in my constituency overwhelmingly support the idea of maintaining their rail lines and not trucking their grain to market. They support that contention for a number of reasons. First, it is more convenient for them from a cost point of view that the rail lines remain and be there as a service to the farmer for shipping grain to market. It is a system that works well. It can even be more efficient with rehabilitation of the rail lines.

As well, this not only affects the farmer but small-business people in all the towns and villages through which those rail lines pass. If a rail line is abandoned, many of the farmers will shop elsewhere and many businesses will be forced to close down. It even affects the people who live in the community, including many senior citizens. There are many people in communities such as Kelvington and Lintlaw and many other communities in my riding who have told me that even their senior citizens are concerned about rail line abandonment. If the rail line goes, fewer people will shop in town and fewer businesses will be in town. Therefore the services will be that much poorer and senior citizens will not be able to get the medical and dental facilities they want in their senior years. For those reasons they believe the rail lines should stay. I think those are important points.

In my riding during the last few years there have been a number of fights with the CTC, the CNR, the CPR, Otto Lang and others over maintaining the rail lines. For example, I can think of the tremendous fight we had to maintain a rail line that went into Preeceville, which is a very large community in my constituency. In that instance many people got together to form a "save our rail line committee". They wanted to make sure that the rail line to the community of Preeceville was preserved. After going to the CTC, lobbying and fighting for a number of months, they were able to maintain and preserve the rail line.

Another success story in my riding concerned the rail line that goes to Rosthern Calder and MacNutt. Once again, the people of those communities banded together. They are from small communities: Rosthern has perhaps 100 people, Calder has approximately 300 and MacNutt is somewhat smaller. They did their research and lobbying and put up a fight. They persuaded the CTC and the powers that be that those rail lines should stay and be upgraded. Their present concern over upgrading those rail lines is that the money in the rail line rehabilitation fund actually goes into upgrading rail lines and will not be spent in trucking grain to market.

I am very concerned about this because the smaller a community and the smaller the group of people affected, the more difficult it is to persuade the CTC or the Minister that they are important. It is more difficult for smaller groups to present their arguments. It is more difficult for a smaller community to get a share of the money which is in the rail line rehabilitation fund. If some of that money is diverted to trucking, the likelihood of remaining funds being used in smaller communities will diminish. For those reasons I cannot

Western Grain Transportation Act

sit idly by and allow that to happen without speaking out. It is important to the Rostherns, Calder and MacNutt of the country that the money be used to upgrade their rail lines and ensure their efficiency.

There are other rail lines that are being seriously considered in my riding and which may be affected by Bills such as this. I am holding a copy of the *Western Producer* dated September 29, which carries an article entitled "Rail Lines Under Study". It has a list compiled by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool of rail lines that are under study by Transport Canada. It lists approximately 35 different rail lines of which two happen to be in my constituency. One subdivision which is under review is Rhein, a town of about 500 people. According to the Wheat Pool, Transport Canada is studying 25 miles of that rail line. There are 475 producers who deliver their grain to points along that rail line.

The second review taking place in my riding is on a subdivision point called Tonkin. That community is much smaller, with a line of only approximately 17 miles. However, there are 197 people who deliver their grain to points along that line. The line is very important to them and they are very concerned that the rail line rehabilitation funds are used to upgrade the lines and preserve them and not be drained for trucking. If that happens, the rail lines and elevators disappear and we see more centralizing with huge inland terminals. Where does it stop?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but the time allotted to him has expired. He may continue with unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin-Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Motion No. 34 which was moved by my colleague the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin). The effect of this motion is to strike out Clause 17(4) which gives the Administrator power to enter into agreements which would basically provide funds for those who want to move grain through the trucking mode.

In rising to support this motion, I would like to use my constituency of Dauphin-Swan River as an illustration since the situation there is not unlike that outlined by my hon. friend for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) with respect to some of the problems and issues we face in our rural ridings. I want to underline some of the concerns that we have and perhaps give some concrete illustrations. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words, and if we can give a concrete illustration of our situation perhaps it would help Hon. Members opposite and some of my friends to my right understand the situation better. Hopefully it will enlighten them. Their situations and problems are somewhat different as they are south of the Trans-Canada Highway and have easy access to large highways, big trucks and all the other benefits of living in that particular part of Manitoba. They do not really appreciate some of the difficulties in areas further north.