

Restraint of Government Expenditures

Mr. Mazankowski: Not enough trips by Jetstar.

Mr. Neil: One of the reasons is that the bill is so complicated that it is almost impossible to explain because one of the first things the farmers ask you is under what circumstances they will receive a pay out. It might be easy for the hon. member for Assiniboia but is not very easy for the average layman to understand. The hon. member for Assiniboia, like myself and other members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, spent about four to five months studying the bill and receiving detailed explanations from the experts, but it is certainly impossible in a matter of an hour or two to explain the details of the program to the farmers and to tell them when they will get a payment.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Farmers are just as smart as anyone else and they can absorb it as fast as anyone else.

Mr. Neil: No doubt they are as smart as the minister who interjected. I have a lot of respect for farmers. There are many very intelligent farmers who understand what is happening here and who understand the government's actions.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): You should not have said that it takes two or three hours for them to understand. You should have more respect for the farmers.

Mr. Mazankowski: Make your own speech.

Mr. Neil: I know that when I am through the minister will want to make his own speech on the Western Grain Stabilization Act.

Mr. Mazankowski: Tell us something about shoes.

● (2150)

Mr. Neil: I would say that the farmer in western Canada is one of the smartest businessmen in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neil: For a person to understand the western grain stabilization bill, he would have to be a chartered accountant or have a mathematical or computer mind.

Mr. Goodale: That is not so.

Mr. Neil: The hon. member says it is not so, but he should go back and spend more time on the hustings and talk to some farmers with respect—

Mr. Goodale: I have just completed 58 meetings. I know what they are saying about the Western Grain Stabilization Act.

Mr. Neil: If the hon. member has completed 58 meetings, I wonder why some 40,000 farmers are opting out of the program.

Mr. Goodale: They all must be in your constituency.

[Mr. Neil.]

Mr. Neil: I take it they did not understand what the parliamentary secretary was explaining to them.

Mr. Goodale: Assiniboia has the highest participation of any constituency on the prairies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I think the parliamentary secretary and other hon. members should let the hon. member complete his speech. With all those interjections I think that he must have difficulty addressing the Chair. Other people are trying to help him make his speech.

Mr. Neil: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your interceding in the matter, but I always enjoy remarks from the other side. It gives one an opportunity to respond off the cuff, and it gets rather interesting at times.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neil: In closing I would like to refer for a few moments to the clause which would repeal section 272 of the Railway Act. I will not go into detail, as I mentioned earlier.

The speech given by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain goes into the historic aspect of this section and, as I said, it should be compulsory reading for all hon. members of this House. The repeal of this section would eliminate the "at and east" rate, an historic rate structure, as historic as the Crow rates in western Canada, and like the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain I also wonder whether this move to eliminate section 272 of the Railway Act is the first step to eliminate the Crow rates. I can assure hon. members on the other side that if the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board attempts to take the benefits of the Crow rates away from prairie farmers, the repercussions he heard with respect to his \$750,000 travelling expense account will be like a handclap compared to a thunderclap.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: You understate the case.

An hon. Member: Stop interrupting.

Mr. Neil: The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) says I understate the case, but I think people can understand the difference between a handclap and a thunderclap. However, I certainly hope this is not the first step to monkey with our rates.

For the reason I have given, namely, the attempt to repeal section 272 of the Railway Act, the clause which would do away with research and development grants, and other clauses of the bill which have been referred to by other hon. members on this side of the House, the bill will obviously have to be opposed by hon. members on this side of the House, and we will have no alternative but to vote against it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, there comes a time in parliament when it becomes particularly appropriate that certain things happen in juxtaposition with other things, and I think it is particularly appropriate at a time