

Mr. Pepin: Yes.

Mr. Korchinski: They say that because we are closer to that port. But over the years what is the history of this Government? It has placed a lot of stock in representations from the Wheat Pool. Well, I belonged to that pool organization. I used to be chairman of the local pool in my little community so I know all about that organization. But they have terminals on the West Coast and the East Coast and their interests are not in Churchill. I say this openly, not in defiance, but it is a fact. It does not really matter to the National Harbours Board as long as it can satisfy a few pressure groups.

I look at the Bill and I see that the Government will be responsible for transportation over the stretch between Thompson Junction and Churchill. What has Thompson Junction got to do with it? If the Government had come to the edge of the farming community then it would make sense. But where is Thompson Junction? It is a mining community. If the Government had come to Hudson Bay, or, to say the least, Le Pas, then I could see the wisdom. But Thompson Junction? The farmers have to take their product to a mining community and from there on the Government will take it over.

There is an article in one of my local papers which says that the U.S. has 25,000 miles of inland waterways, which is a cheap way to move products. The Mississippi-Missouri system contains 9,000 miles of inland waterways with a nine foot draft. This river system is maintained by the U.S. Government. Fourteen states are within 300 miles of the waterways. In 1977-78, grain rates were between 12 and 18 cents per bushel. How in the world are we going to compete against that type of situation, Mr. Speaker? I look at other countries, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) dealt with that subject very well. He referred to Argentina and Australia. They are within 200, 300 or 400 miles of any waterway. Water transport is very cheap, not so with railway.

• (1540)

A question was raised just this afternoon with reference to rail line abandonment. We have no assurance, despite the fact that there will be additional cost, that these lines will not be abandoned. As a matter of fact, the variable rates ensure that there will be greater abandonment. That is ensured because those rail lines which cover a greater distance will simply have to disappear because the cost factor itself will cause people to move away or to transport goods in other ways. Therefore, there will be a loss of traffic. There will be a railway system but not enough traffic. Consequently, there will not be another application.

It seems passing strange that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) a few days ago introduced a so-called recovery budget, and here we have the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) going all out to take away money from those people who happen to be great spenders. They are locked into the system. They have to spend money on fuel, fertilizer, chemicals. If they do not, they do not get a crop. They have to update their machinery. Let me tell you, you do not have to

Western Grain Transportation Act

beg a farmer to spend money; he will. He will go all out to be as efficient as possible, and he will try every method.

I wonder where we are heading. Some people suggest that there is a revolution going on, and this will revolutionize our industry. I am afraid that that word "revolutionize" might mean that there will be a revolution, because all I can see is that if any farmers survive these times, they will probably have very, very large farms. The net result is that the smaller farmers will fall by the wayside, and the big operators will still survive. There will then be only large landowners left, and there will be great distances between farms.

There are some pretty big tractors nowadays pulling some pretty wide cultivators. It does not take very long to cultivate a field. These new farmers are going to be efficient, but simultaneously with the emergence of these huge land possessors, huge unemployment lineups will start forming. I wonder how patient the Canadian people will be when they hear or read reports about these landowners. I sometimes wonder whether we will not reach the day when the Canadian people will say, "enough is enough", and we will have to split up some of those land possessions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but his time has expired. If the Hon. Member were to seek unanimous consent, perhaps he will be allowed to continue his speech. Is there unanimous consent?

An Hon. Member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): There is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) a question. He blamed railway workers, particularly railway engineers. He implied that they were an important factor in the high cost of transporting grain. Does the Hon. Member not realize that, as a result of dieselization and other programs, the number of railway workers in Canada has been reduced in the last 25 years from 200,000 to less than 100,000, and that most of the workers who work for the railway make less than half the amount he talked about, make less than \$20,000 a year, and that there are only a couple of thousand engineers, at the most, who may make the over \$50,000 which the Hon. Member ascribes to them, although I doubt that they do? Because of the increased power of the engines, the number of hopper cars and freight cars which a train can haul has more than doubled. We have trains of 150 or more cars, so there are fewer engineers needed. If he knows all these things, why does the Hon. Member draw the red herring of supposed high wages over this trail? Does he not realize that if the farmers are going to get the support which they need to stop the implementation of this bad proposal of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin), they will need all the friends they can get, and many of their friends are railway workers who elect Members of Parliament, who should be with them rather than against them? The Hon. Member's kind of argument does not help very much.