

Transportation

compared to 256 million bushels for export in 1956-57. We made a bargain and we will stick by it. We observe that on the one hand the government is attempting to stick to its arrangement while on the other it is trying to slide the thin edge of the wedge into this contract which was made for the export of produce in 1898 and reinstated in 1927.

Mr. Pickersgill: 1925.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): What is the purpose of a three-year study and what effect will it have? It will have the effect of creating a slowdown in the efficient movement of grain, in order that the commission will be convinced that the movement of grain is a handicap to the railway companies. If someone came along to me or someone else and said the government intended to make a three year study of my business, and if it found that the business was losing money and said it would pay a subsidy from then to eternity, what would I do during those three years? I would certainly attempt to show that I was losing money. I certainly would not adopt means to provide greater efficiency. I would try to slow down movement of grain, and lose or purport to lose money. Certainly I would show figures which would indicate that I had lost money during the three-year period.

It is my suggestion, Mr. Chairman, that any operation under the circumstances would be slowed down in order to incur a loss during the three years, thus ensuring the payment of a subsidy. That is why I do not like this clause. There is no doubt in my mind that the railway companies are making money by hauling grain under the Crowsnest pass rates. There is no doubt in my mind that following the large-scale abandonment this bill would allow the railway companies will make more money. It certainly will take more than three years to abandon the 1,800 miles of track which is not protected. It will take more than three years to bring about the abandonment of that 1,800 miles of line, from the time of the applications for abandonment which will be allowed following the passage of this bill.

One might assume that if all branch lines were abandoned there could be an efficient transportation system operated, so far as the railway companies are concerned. There would be one line through the prairies in the south and one through the prairies in the north, and the farmers would have to haul their grain distances of up to 100 miles to the main lines. The railways would then be required only to haul the grain to the lakehead or Vancouver.

Perhaps under those circumstances we would have the most efficient possible method of hauling grain. I am sure that if we asked officials of the railway companies whether they could make money under the Crowsnest pass rates following the abandonment of all branch lines, most of them would answer in the affirmative.

An hon. Member: I think that is right.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Someone said "I think that is right". If the officials would answer in the affirmative, would they not also agree that the abandonment of the 1,800 miles possible following the passage of this legislation would bring about a greater saving to the railway companies operating under the Crowsnest pass rates? I think they would answer in the affirmative in that regard as well. Why then do we need a three-year study before the abandonment of this 1,800 miles of track, and before we know what the benefits of that abandonment will be to the railway companies? Those are some of the doubts I have in mind.

Am I correct in assuming that we are to adjourn for a supper hour between seven o'clock and eight o'clock? If there has been that agreement, Mr. Chairman, I would call it seven o'clock.

• (7:00 p.m.)

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the hon. gentleman would like to continue until he has used up his half hour, before we adjourn.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): I would rather not. I would rather have some dinner and continue after eight o'clock, although it really does not matter to me.

Mr. Pickersgill: Then, Mr. Chairman, I think there was an understanding that we rise between seven o'clock and eight o'clock.

The Chairman: Order. Shall I rise, report progress and request leave to sit again later this day?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.
Progress reported.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I understand there has been agreement among the parties that the house will suspend the sitting from seven o'clock to eight o'clock. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.