

Western Grain Transportation Act

process it. Processing in western Canada was being discouraged. Furthermore, it cost the livestock producers and hog producers money to feed their animals which created a disadvantage.

When the Minister set out the Gilson recommendations he pointed out these three contortions. The purpose of the Gilson study was to solve those problems. These problems would be solved if his recommendations were accepted. A total of \$287,000 was spent for Gilson to find a solution to the problems. The Minister then changed that solution by cutting it in half. The vast majority of western Canadians would have supported the Gilson solution. Cutting that recommendation in half whereby the producer would receive half of the money and the railway the other half was a reasonable compromise, but the Minister has gone to the extreme and it is no wonder that he has lost all support from western Canada. Not one person from that cross-section in my riding, for example, will support Bill C-155.

That should bring home a message to the Minister. Surely he should withdraw this Bill and return to the Gilson report and perhaps even to the more favourable alternative presented by the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), who has suggested that we go back to freedom of choice, upon which this country was originally built. The farmers of Quebec, Alberta and Saskatchewan and across the whole nation could decide what they want to grow and how they would grow it, without Government interference. It is a freedom of choice issue. The Hon. Member for Vegreville has gone back to the very beginning, back to the people.

● (1240)

We would say to the producers: "You decide where this money will go; it is a shortfall in agriculture, but you decide. The choice is yours." Some may say: "We will pay it to the railway". That is fine. The farmer could get a card showing he paid the money to the railway and get the appropriate rate. Others may say: "I want to feed my hogs". That is just as much agriculture as shipping wheat to the export market. This person would get his payment. Another person may want to haul his grain to the feedlot. The choice is his. Why should the choice not be his? That is what Canada is all about, freedom of choice, not the Government telling people what is good for them, or the Government telling you what you have to do. It is not the Government telling you how it is going to spend your money. For once let us go back to the people and find out what the people want. The Government should go to the producers and find out what they want.

I challenge the Hon. Minister to go to meetings like the one I attended last weekend. I challenge him to ask the producer what he wants. The Minister will find there is not a producer—I say this with good reason—in western Canada who will support this Bill as it is today. The Minister and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) say: "We have the Wheat Pool behind us". I say to them that they have not got the Wheat Pool behind them. They have not got the Alberta Wheat Pool behind them. I do not think there are five out of 25 or one out

of ten of the Wheat Pool members who are supporting this Bill. When the Minister says they have 130,000 members of the Wheat Pools, that is balderdash. It is nonsense.

When I mainstreeted in my riding last year, farmers came to me and one out of ten said: "Pay the money to the railway". In a meeting in Standard the other night the delegate for the Wheat Pool stood up and said: "I do not support paying the money to the railway; I support paying the money to the producer".

The Minister can do something if he wants for Canada. He can do something really good for Canada. He can withdraw this Bill and give the people a choice. Give the producers a choice. Let them decide how their money will be spent. Then you will see this country really do something worth while. We will see processors who can process. Give us a chance to process in the West. Give us a chance to raise hogs. Give us a chance to raise cattle. We have our own markets. We are not trying to interfere with the Quebec market. Already the Quebec market has a waterway all the way to Japan where it can ship its live hogs. Already the Quebec producers have a hold on the market in New York. But we are closer to California. We are closer to the western U.S.A. where there is a tremendous market for hogs and cattle.

Why is the Government trying to kill us? Why is the Government trying to kill agriculture in western Canada? Give us a chance to grow. Give us a chance to contribute and make this country a greater and better nation. That is all we ask the Minister to do. Give us a chance. Give us a fair deal. If you give us a fair deal, we will hold our own with anyone in this country or anyone in the world. Our producers will do that if they are given a chance. But if the Government is going to handcuff them and then expect them to raise hogs, handcuff them and then expect them to raise cattle, handcuff them and then expect to have processing, the Government is dreaming wildly. That is a wild dream that cannot take place because the Government is making it impossible for western agriculture to be competitive. This Bill makes it impossible for our cattlemen, our hog producers and our processors to be competitive. All we ask for is a fair show. We ask the Minister to withdraw this Bill and to bring in a bill that will build Canada, not destroy Canada.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that our position is clear. We do not intend to let this Bill pass through the House of Commons and become law. We will do whatever we must in order to stop it within the rules of Parliament. We are not going to enter into any kind of arrangements, other than arrangements to eliminate this threat to the Crowsnest Pass freight rate. I want to put on the record just a little bit of the history so that people will understand what it is we are talking about.

In 1881 the CPR syndicate accepted from the people of Canada land, cash, rail lines and other significant benefits in exchange for a commitment thereafter and forever efficiently to maintain work and run the Canadian Pacific Railway. Specifically the Crow rate was agreed upon by the CPR and