

If the railroads claim they have a case for dumping that cost on to the farmers, let them put forward that case. They have not done that. They have not attempted to. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) in promoting the Crow Bill has also not attempted to estimate that cost or to bring any figures forward for public examination.

One example of how very heavily this cost will affect the farmers has been suggested in the area around Arelee where farmers who had this experience found transportation payments doubled. This is leaving aside the cost of maintaining the roads through the Province and the municipality. As well as paying 13.8 cents per bushel to ship to Thunder Bay, according to the Crow rate, they also have to pay 13.6 cents per bushel to ship by road. Previously, they could haul it just two miles to the northeast branch line elevator. Once that was taken from them, some of the other elevators were sometimes small and full and there were varying distances they had to ship, the cost to a great many of them was almost the same as the cost of shipping on the rail from that larger central point to the Lakehead. In other words, by closing the branch line the railroad doubled the cost to the farmer to ship his or her grain. This is in addition to the further hidden cost which those producers must pay as taxpayers in Saskatchewan to maintain the highway. The railway would prefer not to pay the cost of maintaining the railway. Therefore, by a back door route the railway dumps the equivalent of that cost on to the farmers whom they are supposed to be serving. One of the primary objects of the creation of the railroad and of the massive subsidies given to the railroad was to have them haul the grain and other such necessary commodities.

I think it is very important that Motion No. 35 be unanimously supported by this House. It does not in any sense disadvantage farmers who find their rail line has been abandoned. It does not in any sense hinder provision to them of adequate trucking services. It is very carefully defined so as to indicate that the only restriction, the provision of trucking services, perhaps by the railroad itself, shall not be used to destroy present branch line service.

I see that you are indicating my time is up, Mr. Speaker. I hope we will hear further from our friends to the far right who previously have spoken up in defence of the farmers.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. Before I recognize the next Hon. Member, may I deal with the proceedings on the adjournment motion?

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 45, to inform the House that the questions to be raised at the time of adjournment are as follows: the Hon. Member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall)—Shipping—Monitoring of UNCTAD

agreement—Effect on Canada. (b) Request for release of studies; the Hon. Member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers)—National Defence—Fatal accident at Lac-la-Biche—Establishment of board of inquiry. (b) Age of equipment; and the Hon. Member for Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands (Mr. Manly)—Employment—Request for forestry job-creation program.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION ACT

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-155, an Act to facilitate the transportation, shipping and handling of western grain and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Transport; and Motion No. 35 (Mr. Benjamin).

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I had not originally intended to speak to this motion, but having sat through most of the day listening mainly to Members of the New Democratic Party talking in defence of this motion, I feel I should put a few facts on the record.

First, the amendment proposed by the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) is an amendment to Section 17(4), which reads:

The Administrator, on behalf of the Minister, may enter into agreements to provide for the movement of grain by motor vehicle transport where, in his opinion, such agreements would be in the best interests of the grain producers.

The amendment would alter the effect of that subclause only on those branch lines which have already been abandoned by order of the Canadian Transport Commission. The original Bill as referred to the committee did not contain Clause 17(4). It was an amendment moved by the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) and adopted by the committee. The committee adopted it obviously because it thought it would make Bill C-155 a better Bill. While I did not vote on it, I agreed with it. I thought it was a sensible amendment to provide greater latitude in the transport of grain and to make better use of other modes of transport.

All day we have listened to tales of woe about how this will mean the end of branch lines in western Canada. I think it is nothing more than a red herring being hauled across the trail of this Bill to continue a filibuster which the NDP has obviously mounted against this Bill. That should come as no surprise to any of us because Members of the NDP said forthrightly from the very beginning that they would use every tactic in the book to delay passage of this legislation.

● (1640)

The effect of the amendment which was defeated in committee would be to provide the opportunity for the Administrator