

Let me put a few figures onto the record that will indicate some of the problems livestock producers are having with the Bill. If this Bill passes, the cost of a hog producer's feed grain next year will be \$6.78. That is a cost of about \$2.31 per hog produced. That will mean a loss in Alberta alone of \$3.5 million. If the subsidy is paid to the railroad and not to the farmer, the cost to a hog farmer in my constituency to produce that hog will increase by \$6.37. That will mean a loss to Alberta hog farmers of \$9.5 million. Carrying those projections through to 1991 when farmers will be paying most of that inflationary Crow benefit, the increased cost of feed will be \$19.58, which is about \$6.50 a hog, or a \$9.9 million loss. Because of the difference between paying that subsidy to the railroads and paying it to the farmer, the increased cost will be \$11 per hog, or a loss of \$16.5 million. If the changes in cost are added up only on the difference between paying the railroads versus the farmers, it will be a loss to Alberta hog farmers of \$142 million over ten years, something that no hog farmer in the Province can handle.

We must at this time come to grips with the inevitability of a decrease in the livestock industry in western Canada. The slaughter plants in western Canada are old and outdated. New slaughter plants are being built here in eastern Canada. There is at this time a self-sufficiency and a movement to export feed grain in Ontario. A competitive farmer in Ontario who grows corn is capable of producing 100 to 110 bushels per acre. In the barley producing area of Alberta, the average yield per acre is between 35 and 55 bushels of grain. It is already half as expensive for the farmer in eastern Canada to feed an animal on corn, because the protein equivalent is almost the same, as it is for the farmer in my Province where we are unable to grow corn to feed an animal on barley. If on top of that is added the extra cost of moving the grain, a cost which will not get back to the livestock producer, and if this will produce the losses that I have put on the record—and I can put the same losses on the record for the cattle industry—the amount of hog livestock produced in western Canada will be decreased by half a million hogs by 1990 instead of being increased due to an increase in population.

Eastern Canadian hog farmers are already capable of moving into a natural market in Japan and in the Far East because it is cheaper for them to put those hogs on ships in the Great Lakes and send them through the Panama Canal than it is for western farmers to put those same hogs on a train and ship them to Vancouver where they will be put on a ship that will go to that Japanese market. Some of the feedlot operators in my constituency are now buying feedlots in Ontario to prepare themselves for this inevitable difference in cost, because if this problem is not dealt with—and of course, the one way to deal with it would have been in Crow legislation—many of the aspirations of livestock farmers in western Canada will come to naught.

I believe that this Party has put forward an excellent suggestion, Mr. Speaker. It is a suggestion that I call freedom of choice. Let us have some freedom. If the Government is so sure that it is better to pay the railroads, the Government should allow those farmers in western Canada who want to pay

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the railroad to do so. Let those farmers who want to take that payment to their own farm have the choice to do so. I think that the Government would find that most of the farmers would choose to have that payment made directly to them so that they could keep an eye on the railroads, and if the railroads did not provide adequate cars and an efficient way to move grain to the coast, then, perhaps the trucking industry or the livestock industry could provide that service. That is the kind of freedom that I think should be provided.

The kinds of comments made by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) about the political clout of eastern Canada versus western Canada cannot continue to be made. That would create diversity and disharmony, and a number of years ago when the separatist element in western Canada rose so quickly, we saw what diversity and disharmony can do. The Crow rate is as important or even more important than the issues that brought western Canadians to their feet at that time.

I believe that the Minister ought to allow the committee of this House the opportunity to put forward these proposals to the farmers of the nation so that the farmers can have their say. Leaders of farm groups have come to some consensus, and often when they give information to the Minister, he will hear only one story. But Members of Parliament who are in their constituencies and who talk to farmers day by day get to know the real facts of how it is hurting their operations. If Members of Parliament are not allowed the freedom of speech, we will not hear the whole story. That is why closure of this Bill is so devastating. My ten minutes have passed very quickly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I rise probably in more anger than I have ever risen in the House before. In fact, I would like to take this Parliament apart board by board and use them on every Liberal. To use what is like the Magna Carta to western Canada for the crass political advantage of another region is to defy the nature of this country, the history upon which it is built and the very reason for the existence of the crow rate in western Canada.

There was no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the Crow rate needed to be changed. Through the 1950s, but particularly the 1960s, the western transportation system began to deteriorate at a rate that, moving through the decade of the 1970s and into the 1980s now, meant that something had to be done to improve railway transportation. That is a given fact. That is not debatable.

It is also a given fact that the inflationary rate on the Crow advantage was such that the advantage today is greater than it was when the Crow was initiated. That is not debatable. But what is debatable is to take, for Liberal political reasons, an advantage from the West and give it to another part of the country.

Let me talk for a moment about why there was a need for the Crow rate on the Prairies to begin with. First, transportation in the country is based on the competitive theory. That is