

Thunder Bay. The Thunder Bay Multicultural Association is an organization more than ten years old. This group unites the various ethnocultural associations of our community. It was a great pleasure a year ago for me as a faculty member of Lakehead University to join with community members in organizing the seventh biennial conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association in Thunder Bay. I appreciated the strength that members of the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association brought to our planning and to our execution, if you will, of the conference in late October.

The multicultural realities of Thunder Bay are typical of many parts of western Canada and the past and, of course, these days of the various metropolitan centres of our country. We in the New Democratic Party have always regarded the multicultural nature of Canada as an important reality that governments should recognize and respond to.

There were indications during the Conservative election campaign that this reality would be true for the Party now governing, that there was to be recognition of the needs of the Canadian people, that multicultural realities called for the establishment of a department and that the Government would take action in order to meet the needs of affirmative action and justice for Japanese Canadians. Also we have the new concern now arising of justice for Chinese Canadians over the head tax in decades past. These are the various areas that I see need to be responded to and where there is a need to undertake spending. I find myself very anxious in considering what the Government has put before us in the past week.

We need a full-fledged multicultural department which will have a larger mandate laid open to it. We need, as the Minister of State for Multiculturalism (Mr. Murta) has suggested, a policy that is more than just one of providing some support for festivals, although even that is not what it used to be. We need more than just the politics of multiculturalism. Therefore, I shall be very attentive to these needs on behalf of my constituents. It is imperative that government act, in this area as in others, on the mandate it has.

My constituents and various friends have said to me: "Make sure you keep them honest". On Thursday night I felt very anxious about precisely that, of keeping the current Government honest and ensuring that it lives up to its mandate.

There are people in my riding who have not forgotten Conservative governments past. There was the Diefenbaker Government which was marked by recession, unemployment, high interest rates and so on. People have not forgotten the houses they lost in that era. There are people who still remember all too well the 1930s and the Bennett Government of those days. There is expectation in the Canadian people today that this Government will do much better by them than the last one did.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any comments or questions?

Mr. Nickerson: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Member. I have always considered it an important part of my education to listen carefully to speeches made by members of the New Democratic Party, especially when it comes to a

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Member like the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin), and I see the new Member for Thunder Bay-Nipigon (Mr. Epp) will be no exception to this rule.

I was impressed by the Hon. Member's plea for capital spending on the part of the Government in order to reduce unemployment. Another member of the NDP whom I listened to on the same subject is the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy). One of the projects he suggested is for heavy capital investment in the railway going to Churchill and in the grain-handling facilities at the Port of Churchill. If that could be done as the Hon. Member describes it, one could reduce the reliance on the Lakehead method of shipping out grain. One could ship grain out from the Prairies cheaper than having it go through the Lakehead. Would the Hon. Member who has just spoken support his colleague, the Hon. Member for Churchill, in doing precisely that?

• (1140)

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. It allows me to say something more about our important grain trade. I disagree with my colleague from Manitoba about the importance of the grain trade through Churchill. I frankly hand that proposal back. I do not see any need to do that. We in Thunder Bay are concerned through the Harbour Commission and other bodies about future demands on transportation.

We had a 20-million tonne season just past. Regrettably as a result of the crop difficulties in the southern Prairies, I do not expect the present crop year to be anything like that. However, our concern in Thunder Bay is about reaching 25 million tonnes. Concern is being expressed. Study is being made of ways to move a good deal more grain. The Hon. Member for Thunder Bay Atikokan (Mr. Angus) and I during the election campaign expressed interest in exploring the need for additional elevator capacity in Thunder Bay. We believe there is a good case for that in terms of ensuring that elevator storage space will always be adequate and that there is enough grain to ensure that the interface of trains and ships is always the most efficient possible.

In the context in which we hope to bring the port up to a 25 million tonne capacity, expecting that that is the size of crop we will have to move at some time and comparing the quite limited amount which goes through Churchill, about one million tonnes during a short season, we should have the most efficient system possible at both places. We want to ensure that we can move all grain to markets and that their returns are as large as they can be while we have lots of employment in Churchill and in Thunder Bay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I remind Hon. Members that questions on their speeches must be pertinent and directed to the particular Member. They should not be addressed to other Members.

Mrs. Mary Collins (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak for the first time in this Chamber and to support the Speech from the Throne. I offer my congratulations to the