

living and breathing today that this is the worst possible time for any tampering with the Crow rate. Only a callous, indifferent Government such as we have now would think of doing so.

Setting aside the freight rate increase aspect of Bill C-155 for a moment, I am appalled as well that the Government would scuttle the producer in favour of the railroads. A cynic might even suggest that the railways wrote this legislation themselves, for themselves. Indeed, under the terms of Bill C-155 the railways will receive 100 per cent of their long-run variable costs; 20 per cent contributions to overhead costs; 20.5 per cent contributions to capital costs and, by 1990, a 1,000 per cent increase in today's freight rate. And what does the producer receive? What does that primary producer of the West who established himself as the bread basket of the world receive? The producer sees his freight rate going up by five and a half times today's rate in under ten years. He loses his statutory protection. He has no performance guarantees from the railways for at least three years. And he has little or no choice in how he transports the products which he produces. That is the unacceptable portion of this Bill. It is unacceptable to the grain farmers and it is unacceptable to this Party. I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, the effect Bill C-155 would have on my constituents who are approaching the point of no return.

This Bill is not in the nation's interest and should not be passed as it is. Canada is a trading nation and grain accounts for some \$6 billion worth of exports annually. But, and this is often forgotten, Mr. Speaker, Canada must be competitive in the marketplace. Other nations besides Canada are competing for grain sales. There is no free ride for Canada. If our prices are not competitive, we will not sell those bushels to build up our export market. And, Mr. Speaker, the competition is stiff. You must establish your market and work for it.

Subsidies to producers exist in every major competing nation. Producers in Argentina are given free rail transportation for shipping their grain from station to shipping port. The grain farmers in the European Economic Market are subsidized to the tune of \$2.53 a bushel. American grain producers are nearly on a par with Canadians. In fact, while we are dreaming up ways to soak the Canadian producer, the Americans are trying to work out ways to assist their producers. That is the difference between the Americans and this Government. Last, but not least, Australian farmers pay less than 50 per cent of the average cost of freighting grain, and their taxes on diesel fuel and gasoline have been reduced by six cents a litre. We must meet those nations head-on in the marketplace. If we fail to meet that kind of challenge, then literally billions of dollars in export sales will be lost to Canada.

I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I did not mention the historical side of the Crow rate issue. I see the Speaker rising, but since the Government Members are not rising to speak, I wonder if I could have the unanimous consent of the House to conclude my remarks?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**An Hon. Member:** No.

### *Western Grain Transportation Act*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It does not appear to be unanimous.

**An Hon. Member:** It was a Liberal who said no.

● (2240)

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to see a friend of mine from the Niagara Peninsula remember his roots back home on the farm in Saskatchewan. I wish more of his colleagues who come from western Canada would get up in this debate and give us more support in our attempt to keep the Crow rate for western Canadian farmers, something that is so important to them and our whole country. I noted during the leadership campaign of the Conservative Party that most of the candidates were very wishy-washy when it came to making a clear statement of protecting the Crow. I am afraid that Party is going to cave in, so I am very pleased to see the Hon. Member for St. Catharines (Mr. Reid) get up and remember where his roots are and what those farmers back there want. I hope he can persuade some of his western Members to get up and make the same kind of speech.

I note also that the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) has been very quiet on the Crow ever since he supported a certain candidate in the leadership race. The new leader of the Conservative Party is not sure he wants to keep the Crow for western Canadian farmers. All of a sudden the Hon. Member for Assiniboia has been muted, he has become a political eunuch on this particular issue. He sits in this House dreaming the impossible dream of the day when he might be the Minister of Agriculture instead of the Hon. Member for Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight) or the Hon. Member for Elgin (Mr. Wise). Where does he stand? Why is he not getting up in this House in favour of keeping the Crow for our farmers back home in Saskatchewan?

If this Bill goes through the House, Mr. Speaker, between now and 1990-91 the increase in the grain freight rate will be about 500 per cent for the farmers in the constituency of Yorkton-Melville. That will drive a lot of small farmers off the land. The price of hauling grain under the Crow is now around 16 cents a bushel. If you increase that by 500 per cent, it will be about 80 cents a bushel by the year 1990-91. There are a lot of farmers in my part of the country who cannot afford that, and they will be driven off the land by this insensitive Government across the way which does not understand the reality of western Canada.

It is also important, Mr. Speaker, that we keep the Crow because of jobs in urban Canada. If farmers are going to be driven out of business and they sell less and less grain, there will be less money in circulation to buy farm machinery and chemicals and other things that farmers need, and more and more people will be unemployed in eastern Canada, indeed in our western cities. If we get rid of the Crow rate and we let our competitors like the Europeans, Americans and Australians continue to massively subsidize their farmers for the shipment of grain, then our farmers will no-longer be competitive and we will lose grain markets around the world. As long as the Americans subsidize their farmers, as long as the Europeans support their farm prices and their grain prices, and the