

sion report, the Snavely report, the port of Churchill, etc? These things are vital and important to the farmers on the prairies. I ask again, where does he stand? All we have to do to get an answer is look at the supplementary estimates. We know where Otto Lang and the Liberal party stood. The Minister of Transport in a speech made in Calgary said that we probably lost \$1 billion worth of sales last year. When I was in China recently the Chinese pointed out that we could transplant hearts, fly to the moon and do all of those marvelous things, yet we could not haul grain on time from the farmer's granary to the ship. The Chinese asked why we could not do that.

Mr. Axworthy: Did you speak in Chinese?

Mr. Nystrom: I know my Chinese is not as good as that of the hon. member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy), but the Chinese were concerned. The Chinese have now turned to the United States for grain and will sign the first grain contract with them in years. I am very happy the Americans are establishing normal relations with the Chinese, but I am also very concerned that Canada and its farmers will lose potential markets because we do not have a grain handling system.

How can we solve this problem? That is what I am asking the Conservative party across the way. I ask where does it stand on these important issues. I want a definitive statement from the Prime Minister of this country about where he stands on Crow. If the Crow rate goes, so go the small farmers. Some Conservatives have said, "Well, you can pay the Crow benefit." In other words, one takes the cost difference between the commercial cost of shipping grain from point A. I use the example of Wakaw where the cost is 13 times higher than the Crow rate. One can take the difference between that and the statutory rate and reimburse the farmer. Over 100,000 farmers will be reimbursed in the form of a cheque sent in the mail. I think that is a very complicated, bureaucratic and indeed potentially dangerous way of making sure the farmer gets the Crow rate benefit. It is very bureaucratic.

With members such as the President of the Treasury Board who is interested in cutting back on government spending and hacking away at government expenses, who will guarantee that that minister or one of his successors will not decide some day to cut back on the Crow benefit program? There is no guarantee that that will not happen.

The railways are interested in a profit and will charge a higher commercial rate for branch lines than they will for main lines. They will charge a higher rate for a little town such as Wakaw than they will for a city such as Prince Albert. Then we will have *de facto* abandonment of the rail lines and *de facto* abandonment of the branch lines. These issues are important. They are vital to western Canada.

By spending a few minutes this afternoon on the Liberal supplementary estimates before the House and introduced by the party across the way, I have pointed out some of the problems we have had in the past that have not been solved. However, I see in a speech made by the Minister of Transport

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that the Conservative party may have some solutions, but the solutions may be more of a problem than the existing situation for many farmers on the prairies.

In conclusion, if the Conservative party goes ahead to abandon or change the Crow rate, it will be in for a fight. It will be in for a fight not only from the people on the prairies and the NDP and its federal caucus, but also from the wheat pools, the co-operatives and the progressive farm groups. It will be in for a fight like it has never had from the government of Saskatchewan.

● (1650)

I serve that as notice to the party which sits across the way. They must not tamper with the Crow rate. They must keep the Canadian Wheat Board strong. They must strengthen the board as a co-operative agency so that it will handle the grain of the farmers on an equal basis. They must retain a quota system so that all farmers, rich or poor, close to delivery points or far, with an early harvest or a late harvest, have an equal opportunity to deliver their grain. We must not follow the law of the jungle, first come first served, or the law of capital, the elephant and the mouse, where the big guy outmuscles the small.

These issues are important. I hope that before this debate is over someone in the Conservative party will stand up to tell us where they stand on these issues which are crucial to the people of my province and region of Canada.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, it is my belief that the supplementary estimates have failed to meet the needs of my constituents and of the people in the rest of the country. Perhaps I can briefly describe my constituency in order to help members better understand my remarks on these estimates.

The Churchill constituency encompasses the northern two-thirds of the province of Manitoba. It has over seven degrees of latitude, over 400 miles, and 12 degrees of longitude. There are many Indian reserves and a number of Métis communities. The Churchill constituency has five mining towns, including Flin Flon and Thompson. The Pas, also in the constituency of Churchill, is a historic community for fur trading and now has some agriculture, the CN and forest products which provide employment for that region.

In The Pas, the Manfor project, formerly called CFI, is an example of what happens when government relies on and gives millions to private enterprise in order to provide employment and develop our resources. An official inquiry and the courts have proven that we were robbed blind. The case was so bad that the present premier of Manitoba forgot that he went to Zurich to sign the original agreement—a very poor memory.

Also within my constituency is the port of Churchill. It is an orphan of Tory and Liberal governments. It has been deserted by its parents. Why has the port not been developed? Why is grain not in the port at the beginning of the shipping season? Why has the CN line to Churchill not been fixed?

Why does the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) call the port a luxury we cannot afford? He was appointed by his