

we will be able to meet the challenges of the future, which I know is what the Hon. Member who moved the motion wishes.

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the Hon. Member who moved the motion. I believe it is an ideal topic to be raised in the House of Commons since this issue has certainly been neglected in the past. I agreed with much of what the Conservative Member had to say, and I thank him especially for his kind remarks about the community at the Port of Churchill. While I am certainly grateful for his remarks, I must say that I found them to be at variance with the remarks made by the Hon. Member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) and the Hon. Member for North Vancouver-Burnaby (Mr. Cook) who speaks for his Party with regard to port policy.

It is interesting to note that in spite of the fact that the Conservative Party supports the use of the Port of Churchill, two of its Members who frequently speak about ports and grain transportation came out against the use of the Port of Churchill.

Since I come from a northern riding, although it is not situated in the Territories themselves, I recognize the need for over-all planning in transportation policies in the North. This lack of planning and co-ordination of services is evident in my riding of Churchill almost on a daily basis. I have become very aware of the inconsistent planning for air travel in the North. The Liberal Government has commissioned a study to be conducted into the role of Churchill in providing services into the Northwest Territories. A consultant discussed this matter with me a week ago. Although the Government conducted another study last fall into transportation in northern Manitoba, which is a legitimate study, the consultant who was conducting this Churchill study told me that his terms of reference did not allow him to look at the role of Churchill in northern Manitoba. Surely if we are to have a reasonable transportation policy, we should not only consider those flights heading North but also consider all flights going in and out of a transportation centre.

This is a problem in Canada that can be seen in other areas as well. I will use my own riding as an example since I am familiar with that area. The Government recently decided to close down runways and airport services at five o'clock in the evening in a number of communities and not open them until eight o'clock the next morning. This was done in the full realization of the fact that many of the scheduled flights either came in after the closing or took off prior to the opening. We therefore had the unusual situation in which the airport would not be open when scheduled flights were arriving or departing. How can the Government claim to be planning when this is the situation? Similarly, runways in northern communities would not be cleared except during stated hours. If a flight was arriving during a snowfall, that carrier would have to pay the cost of clearing the runway.

This is not an isolated situation. In Manitoba, and in my riding alone, Flin Flon, The Pas, Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, Thompson, Gillam, Norway House and Churchill will all be affected by the Government's new restraint program. Throughout Canada, hundreds of communities will be affected

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by a restraint program which the Government never really thought out. I discussed the matter of how that would affect scheduled flights. Let me refer to another dangerous side effect of that particular decision.

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In the North, medical evacuations are most often carried out by air. They depend upon speedy service. If a plane must fly up from Churchill, for example, or up to one of the small communities in the Territories, and if the runway is not cleared and crews must be called in to start clearing that runway at seven o'clock or eight o'clock at night, it may take two or three hours, as is often the case, and then the flight cannot leave until ten o'clock at night. The same problem could occur at another strip at the receiving end as a result of the new Government cutbacks or restraint measures. A small move to save the Government some dollars could endanger the lives of people because of the long time involved in clearing those runways.

Scheduled carriers are also concerned about the new regulations, first, because they will be charged for having a runway cleared, even though they set up their schedules under the old regime and even though it was the policy of the Liberal Government, the policy of Transport Canada, to have those runways open during times of scheduled flights.

This reversal by the Government means that air carriers, which would try to provide good service to many communities, will now be penalized. They will incur extra costs in keeping airports and runways open. That is a terrible situation and it obviously, once again, points to the lack of planning with regard to northern transportation.

One of my other concerns with regard to northern transportation concerns air safety. In Manitoba, search and rescue is carried out from Air Force bases in Edmonton. We have a time lag, which means that a search will not be started for at least two or three hours after it is known that a plane is down or missing. That is valuable time. It is important that the Government either establish more bases for search and rescue in Canada or at least provide funding for organizations like the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association so that various groups within each region of Canada could carry out an interim search until qualified Air Force personnel are on hand. That is another important area of consideration.

The Hon. Member, in speaking for the Liberal Government, discussed many things which have been going on in the last couple of years, and I agree that there has been some work done. I would congratulate the Government for its current research in relation to the rail line to Churchill. This research may be helpful in overcoming the permafrost problem which is preventing the use of hopper cars in delivering grain to the Port of Churchill. I hope that when the research is complete, the Government will spend the funds to do the actual work so that this will not have been just another study following another study with no action taking place. We are all familiar with studies conducted by Governments of all political stripes,