

Government Orders

I remember challenging some of the members, ministers and others to justify that logic. I asked them to show me where my logic was wrong and they could not do it.

After pressuring them they decided to have a study done. What have they done with this study? They have done nothing with it. This study is concluding basically what the Atlantic Provinces Transportation Commission was saying all along, that there has to be a program.

An hon. member: And what you were telling them too.

Mr. Laporte: What we as a caucus were telling them. The reason my caucus and I do not want to see this bill passed is that the cost is going to be too high for this country, both in economic and social terms.

We are asking this government to put forth a realistic alternative. That is all we have been asking right from the beginning. In fact that is all the maritimes have been asking for the last seven years, and this government has ignored them.

This government talks about national unity. It goes on and on about the Constitution, from which I do not want to detract because it is a very important issue. But the government seems to fail to realize that it is doing more to tear apart this country than it has ever done to put it together.

We have fought for 125 years, since the existence of our country, to maintain an east-west relationship despite the strong pulls of the north-south which in many ways naturally draw us.

We now have a government that has just cut those east-west ties one after the other: communications, transportation, telecommunications and the media. It goes on and on.

I was talking to some maritimers last week. They were saying: "Why should we worry about western Canada when we cannot get our grain from there? It is too expensive. We do not seem to get the benefits from central Canada. We would be better off dealing with the Americans". When we hear people talking that way, it is a very frightening statement to hear being made by serious people.

I really hope and plead with this government to reconsider its position on this bill. There is no area of this bill that makes any sense. It defies logic. The only place it makes sense from the government's point of view

is that it is a cut in the deficit, a very short-term gain, which in reality is no gain at all.

I just want to make a few concluding remarks. I concur with many Canadians in that what we need is some sort of parliamentary reform or change. We cannot continue operating this nation the way it is with the sort of attitudes of this government.

It is with a lot of frustration that I speak on behalf of many people from the maritimes who feel very frustrated and disillusioned with this government. It seems to be ignoring their wishes. I can identify with that, being a western Canadian because this government has certainly ignored the needs of western Canadians.

Small business people, family farms, fishermen and others who are simply trying to maintain a living are being attacked continually by this government, and Bill C-26 is just one example of that attack.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, from this side of the House we are asking ourselves what would cause the government or any government to reintroduce six pieces of badly written proposed legislation and insist that it be examined further.

• (1220)

It is beyond our ability to understand why the government would do that. I will focus on the one of the six bills which I know a little bit better. I am asking myself what is the reason the government insists on presenting Bill C-78 for re-examination. Is it because of political ideological bankruptcy? Is it because of political indifference or even perhaps political ineptness? I do not know which of the three.

Bill C-78 has a very unique distinction. In listening to the witnesses from interested organizations and individuals who appeared before our committee, the bill was criticized by virtually every one of them. It was, in addition to that, amazing that both industry and environmental organizations and spokespersons would agree that they would prefer to operate under the present guidelines on environmental assessment, that they are better off under the present guidelines than under the proposed bill.

That is a rather unique feat, to manage to produce a bill that gets criticized by everyone affected. I wonder about the political sensitivity or political bankruptcy of this government because any cabinet, any political organization called a party—as the so-called Progressive Conservatives like to call themselves—would, in the light of what has happened to Bill C-78 since last June,