

direct jobs, but also let us be cognizant of the fact that there are hundreds and hundreds of indirect jobs that are related to these permanent positions.

The government, in its wisdom, has decided to eliminate the grain support from central and western Canada. The Halifax elevator plays a vital role as a grain storage facility. Without it Cover Flour Mill, the only flour mill in Atlantic Canada, would likely be forced to close.

The Halifax elevator requires 260,000 tonnes a year to make it a viable facility. At the moment it is perilously close to moving below that. If that occurs in any substantive way the elevator would be forced to close down its operations partly or wholly and move hundreds of people out of full-time meaningful employment.

Without the Halifax elevator shipping feed grains by light vessel through the Port of Halifax, the only competitive alternative to rail transport, would no longer be possible. Based on past experience, this would result in an increase in the rail rates for domestic feed grains of at least \$10 a tonne.

The livestock industry in the maritimes depends on grain from Ontario and western Canada. If the transport costs go up by \$10 a tonne it is estimated that 5,000 jobs will be lost in the livestock industry, the feed mills, meat packing plants and dairies. I think that bears repeating. If the transportation costs go up by \$10 a tonne it is estimated that 5,000 jobs will be lost.

For some people in the House of Commons losing 5,000 jobs may not be considered a major issue. Large plants in central Canada can close down and 2,000 or 3,000 people lose their jobs. Unfortunately, under the free trade agreement that has become a reality, a regular news item now in many of the regional newspapers. This is sad, it is disappointing, it is regretful, but under the free trade agreement this has become a reality.

In Atlantic Canada losing five jobs is serious. Fifty jobs is a major issue. Five hundred jobs is a regional crisis, and 5,000 jobs is an absolute, total disaster. Yet, that is what the impact of this legislation will do to Atlantic Canada.

Government Orders

I do not understand why people, particularly on the government side from Atlantic Canada, are not standing up and ranting and raving about the absolute lunacy of proceeding with this legislation, are not lobbying the cabinet and lobbying their colleagues to stop this sort of pell-mell run into a major economic crisis. Yet, there seems to be no sound whatsoever coming from the government benches.

If the Halifax grain elevator is required to close because the 260,000 tonnes a year are not realized, that will result in the loss of 283 jobs in the port itself. Another 250 indirect jobs may be lost as well, as I said earlier. Closure of the Dover Flour Mills would result in another 45 jobs being lost and the loss of a local market for producers of milling wheat.

In Ontario four grain elevators have been shut down because At and East has been cancelled—two in Midland, one in Port McNicoll and one in Prescott.

The Ontario flour mills have lost export contracts and require lower wheat prices to compete with Quebec mills for CIDA contracts. At the same time, Ontario farmers are already receiving record low prices and cannot afford to see their prices drop any further.

One can go on and on. I do not think that is necessary. We have to ask: "Who gains by this? Who benefits from this legislation?"

Previous speakers and I have pointed out that hundreds and hundreds of people who live in Atlantic Canada will be losers. A major livestock sector will be a loser. The poultry sector will be a loser. The flour milling will be a loser. Local grain producers will be in difficulty. The people who work in ports and elevators will be losers.

Who gains? Surely, the government must be helping somebody with this particular initiative. Interestingly enough, the winners of the loss of the At and East program are places in central Canada, primarily Montreal, but also ports in Ontario since Halifax and Saint John cannot compete with the St. Lawrence rates.

There is a deep unfairness in that the St. Lawrence seaway is subsidized several millions of dollars annually by the federal government through the provision of free ice-breaking, dredging and other Transport Canada services. While the support for the Great Lakes and the