

*Government Orders*

There are a good number of individuals out there who have commented. They now envisage that because of the job dislocation from the policies of this government and because of the high unemployment which will continue, other individuals will make applications for unemployment insurance. This will necessitate a further increase in premiums for the employer and the employee. It will further erode the confidence of small business in Atlantic Canada. It will cause further havoc to employees who are paying those premiums. The Minister of Finance could not give us a straight answer yesterday as to whether or not he would concur with an increase in the unemployment insurance premiums.

Will the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, which interfaces with all of the other agencies of the Government of Canada, give its comprehensive report? Will it speak to the issue of small business in Atlantic Canada and what its programs have done to small business in Atlantic Canada with the proliferation of the 32 taxes and the increase in the premiums for unemployment insurance? They cannot take it any longer.

If you are a motel operator in Souris, Prince Edward Island, if you own a restaurant in Glace Bay, if you have something in Restigouche, New Brunswick or in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, then that is a commercial enterprise. When you are a small business you are living from month to month or, still worse, from week to week. A further increase in premiums will cause undue significant harm to those small businesses which are operating. We all know because we have small businesses that are operating on a shoe string in every community in the country.

But, no, clause 10 of this bill says ACOA will report only every fifth year with a comprehensive report. I have to agree with those individuals in Atlantic Canada who from what the minister is saying in Atlantic Canada and from what this particular bill says call this hypocrisy. It is not fair or appropriate in the circumstances.

That is a second issue with respect to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. If it is doing so well, why not run to the finish line? Why not have the comprehensive report every second year to tell the people of Atlantic Canada what a fantastic job is being done?

Every year they are going to file an annual report. The annual report has some information in it. There is no question about that. The comprehensive report, as alluded to in this particular clause of Bill C-35, is of paramount importance to those of us who reside in Atlantic Canada.

I want to talk about another aspect of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the fact that it will be reporting every fifth year. Those of us who reside in Atlantic Canada understand that the role of the state cannot mean everything to everyone at any given time. We do understand that the state has a role to play. One of the things that we have argued vigorously and consistently is the fact that those of us in Atlantic Canada are without a significantly high quality public infrastructure to sustain the quality of life in Atlantic Canada and to urge economic opportunities in that region.

I take for example the province of New Brunswick. The province of New Brunswick has been making the request of the Government of Canada to participate in what we now know, and what we have known for a good number of years, is a renewed highway strengthening agreement. Roads, which are a basic tool of infrastructure, a basic tool of transportation, could be upgraded to meet the standards that we now understand to be important for 1991. But the Government of Canada and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency said: "Our mandate really does not cover that. You will have to do that through a special agreement between the province and the feds".

It has never come about. They have been asleep at the switch. ACOA's response is: "That is not our mandate. That is not part of our function. We cannot do that. We do not have the wherewithal. We do not have the monetary sums to expend on this type of program".

I have been asking the federal government in co-operation with the provincial government to extend what is best known as the Fleur-de-lis trail. It is a very picturesque route in Nova Scotia which my colleague from Montreal, the hon. member for LaSalle—Emard who has visited with me on several occasions, has travelled on. Even he, although a colleague, had to admit that this was a very scenic route and there was an obligation certainly by the Government of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada to provide money. I do not mean oodles and oodles of money, as the hon. member from Toronto would lead us to believe, but a sum of money